

BHOODAN MOVEMENT IN INDIA

AN ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

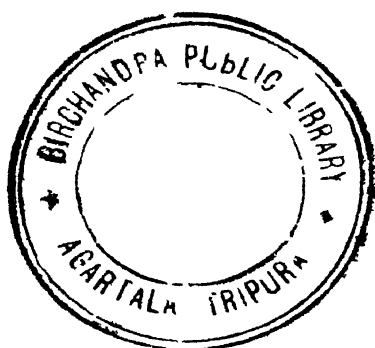
BHOODAN MOVEMENT IN INDIA

AN ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

By

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To
VINOBAJI

*“Thou art the man free from servile bands
Of love to rise, or fear to fall ;
Lord of thyself, though not of lands
And having nothing, yet hath all”*

VINOBA'S MESSAGE

ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ଶାନ୍ତି
ପ୍ରାପ୍ତି
କରିବେ

PREFACE

In an India of kaleidoscopic developments, the Bhoodan movement is perhaps the first living and practical attempt to relate man's spiritual and higher self back to life and its multifarious activities. It is an answer to man's needs in the socio-economic field in terms of the higher morality and illustrates in practice that for all his frailties man is a spiritual co-operative being. An unparalleled human endeavour for the regeneration of Indian society, the Bhoodan movement seeks to establish those non-violent practices, in contrast to the violent and exploitative practices at present vitiating the economic dealings, which would lead to a well-built and harmonious economic and social order. In a quest for the overall transformation of human values, this dynamic mission of Gandhi's spiritual son, aims at regulating the economic and social behaviour of man in accordance with the dictates of man's better self.

The present work proposes to examine the philosophy behind the Bhoodan movement and the application of its tenets to the socio-economic structure and to assess how far they have been successful in contributing to the economic well-being of India's teeming millions. One may well say that it is unsafe to dabble in future but in case of a movement of this type, it is perhaps desirable to explore the possibilities of economic and social reconstruction as envisaged by the movement especially when numerous virtues have been claimed on its behalf.

To facilitate the study of the economics of Bhoodan and its mechanism of social change, the present volume has been divided into three parts: Part one deals with the basic ideology; Part two captioned "The dynamic economy" deals with the history, development and achievements of the Bhoodan

and other ancillary movements; Part three consists of the critical estimate and conclusion.

In arranging the "apparatus criticus" I have numbered footnote references in each chapter separately. To avoid unnecessary duplication, the details of publication concerning books and articles cited in footnotes, have been omitted. However, the selected bibliography given at the end of the work contains all such details to which the reference may be made. The periodical articles and their references in footnotes appear with dates closed in parentheses to avoid confusion. Throughout the work the same edition of the books, as referred to in the bibliography, have been used to maintain coherence and uniformity.

During the course of this study I came in personal contact with many Sarvodaya leaders of the country like Sri Shankarrao Deo, Sri Jayaprakash Narayan, Dada Dharmadhikari, Sri Man Mohan Chaudhari, Sri Purna Chandra Jain, Sri Suresh Ram Bhai, Sri Srikrishna Dutta Bhatta and Miss Nirmala Despande. An informal discussion with them was of great value to me. I also sought interview, twice, with the founder of the movement—Acharya Vinoba Bhave, first at Bamrauli Katara (Agra) on 9th May, 1960, and second time at Varanasi on 8th September, 1965, and learnt, first hand, about his ideas and the basic ideology his mission stands for.

I offer my extreme sense of obligation to my friend Mr. Chandra Prakash Misra of the Indian Administrative Service who actively helped me throughout in processing the study. I am indebted to Mr. A.B. Saran, Director, film division, Khadi Board, Bombay and Professor H.D. Mathur, D. A. V. College, Kanpur for their kind co-operation and valuable suggestions. Thanks are also due to Sri Vinay Awasthi, Kanpur; Sri Anil Sen Gupta, Varanasi; Mr. R.P. Roy and Sri Sudarshan Shah, Bombay; Th. Indrapal Singh and Sri Kashi Bhai of the Village Mangroth for the encouragement given and the keen interest shown in this work.

I gratefully acknowledge extracts of the writings of Vinobaji and many other writers, quoted in this book, from

the publications of Sarva Seva Sangh, Varanasi. For the photographs appearing in this volume, I am indebted to the authorities of Khadigram, Bihar; Gramsevak Samavaya Prakashan, Cuttack and the Art Division, Bhoodan-office, Varanasi.

I do not find adequate words to express my heart-felt gratitude to my respected teacher, Dr. K.P. Bhatnagar, M.A., LL.B., D.Litt., Ex-Vice-Chancellor, Agra University, without whose able guidance and persistent inspiration it would have been impossible for me to write the dissertation on a subject like this and obtain the degree of Ph.D. from the said University.

Dated: Bhoodan-Day
18th April,

Raghavendra Nath Misra

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PART ONE

The Basic Ideology

I



Introduction



I. VINOBA: THE MAN AND HIS MISSION

One who has basked in the magnetism of Gandhi's forceful personality and felt the impact of his institutions may initially fail to react favourably to the slightly different personality and approach of Vinoba. When, for instance, Gandhi in 1940 named Vinoba as India's first Satyagrahi,¹ the first reaction of many people was one of surprise at the selection of such an ascetic figure² for that spectacular task. And yet, it has been recognised, of all Gandhi's followers, none perhaps grasped his message more thoroughly or has laboured more sacrificially to realise the revolutionary dream of the Mahatma through the dynamic miracle that stalks the land today—The Bhoodan Movement.³

(1) **Saint, Genius or a Revolutionary?**

Vinoba's personality is a unique synthesis of a genius, a revolutionary and a saint. He may appear to be a strange paradox in as much as a saint of his calibre has delved into the realm of science in order that the roots of an ideal society could grow from the union of science and self-knowledge.⁴ That is so because he is a genius, a man of

1. M. K. Gandhi, "Ideal Satyagrahi", *Vinoba Bhawe*, ed. P.D. Tondon, p. 1.

2. R.P. Masani, *The Five Gifts*, p. 55.

3. W. Wellock, *India's Social Revolution*, p. 7.

4. Vinoba, *Science and Self-Knowledge*, p. 7.

erudition and a well-read scholar as well. India's history is replete with saintly characters who provided a beacon to individuals, but Vinoba is perhaps the first who has attempted to evolve and perfect the technique of social revolution and salvation by an ardent association of scientific and spiritual values. Vinoba combines in himself the qualities of earnestness of resolve, sincerity of purpose, deep erudition and religious passion, revolutionary devotion to new human values in the socio-economic sphere, concern for the poorest masses and a determination to change the existing social structure. He is a saint in outlook, a genius in thought and a revolutionary in action. His thoughts lead him to action and his actions are based on morality. Life to him is a complete and integrated unit wherein the self-interest can exist only as part of the social interest.

(2) **The Vinobian Way of Life**

The Vinobian way of life is an integration of the Gandhian Sarvodaya doctrine and the philosophy of Vinoba. Sarvodaya involves the Gandhian vision of a society based on self-giving in socially beneficial labour and is a doctrine aiming at universal goodness to be brought about by a change in the human and social values based on love and non-violence. The most important consideration in the doctrine is man⁵ and an economy based on this doctrine is essentially an economy of truth and non-violence.⁶ To this doctrine, Vinoba has added his own philosophy tested on the anvil of life based on the use of non-violent practices. The quest therein is for a well-knit and harmonious social and economic order, for an overall transformation of the values of social and individual life. It is with the aim of evolving a change in the moral and spiritual horizons of man through large-scale and extensive social realization of the socio-economic values of human existence that Vinoba has marshalled the prodigious movement of Bhoodan.

5. M.K. Gandhi, *Village Swaraj*, ed. H.M. Vyas, p. 34.

6. J.C. Kumarappa, *Gandhian Economic Thought*, p. 7.

(3) **The Land-Gift-Mission**

Throughout the late forties and the early fifties, Vinoba had been noticing the breakdown of India's economy, the perilous state of the country's agriculture and the inhuman and appalling poverty of the landless millions. Not less than 50 per cent of the agricultural labour households were landless in 1950-51 and their number was increased to 57 per cent in 1956-57.⁷ Vinoba had noticed how the agrarian legislation, particularly the land distribution and land ceiling laws passed by the various state governments failed to achieve the desired results as the big land owners knew how to escape the mischief of the law. Moreover, traditional land customs were powerful and the ignorance of the peasants was widespread enough to make the laws ineffective. The feasibility of legislation as a measure of agrarian reform was little unless the very concept of land as a marketable commodity did not undergo a change.

(a) **Meaning and Significance.** And it was then that the idea of Bhoodan came to Vinoba—as a revelation during his Telangana⁸ tour in 1951. India's economic life could not be re-organised unless the basic land problem was solved in the interest of the tiller and the landless. It is true that Bhoodan had its immediate origin in the solution to the problem of securing land for India's landless peasants but it would be wrong to suppose that Bhoodan concerns itself solely with the collection and distribution of land. As one may subsequently see, this movement was meant to be the first step in the onward march of the Sarvodaya society. It purported to be an all-round revolution in the socio-economic sphere—a non-violent constructive programme of transformation of India's social structure through a radical change in values.

7. G.O.I., *Agri. Labour in India*, Second Enquiry Report, Vol. I, p. 57.

8. Telangana is a region of Andhra Pradesh where the first land donation was given to Vinoba. A detailed description of it has been given in Chap. III—Birth of the Bhoodan Movement.

The Bhoodan movement is no mere mercy mission started by Vinoba on behalf of the landless. True, Vinoba exhorts the privileged to part with a portion of what they have in favour of those that have not. As land is the basic factor and source of production in this country, a solution of the problem of ownership of land by those who till it must be settled in the interests of real democracy which Sarvodaya aims to establish. Bhoodan is a step in the direction of the attainment of real democracy as it is a call to the land owners to recognise their real interest and try to protect it by conceding the landless their due rights. The "Dan" does not mean charity: it really implies equal distribution.⁹

(b) **Basis and Ideology.** The movement may be looked at as a concrete manifestation of the application of the universal principles of Love, Truth and Non-Violence to India's practical problems. The ideological basis of the movement is the philosophy which asserts that whatever people have is a trust and should be held and used as such, whether it is land or any other kind of property, or whether it be knowledge, skill or experience. It is a trust that people hold for their fellow human beings and for the whole community. It is not meant for their personal enjoyment alone; everyone has a share in it. It is by propagating this philosophy of Love and Truth and by persuading people to regard themselves and live as one family that Vinoba has aimed at bringing about a non-violent agrarian revolution. The movement thus arose by the surrender of part of a person's land but in course of time partial sharing developed into total sharing. But this concept of sharing Vinoba has now made universal and many important extensions of the idea have taken place to which the author shall refer later on.

II. BHOODAN: THE ECONOMY IN MAKING

The Bhoodan movement thus aims to prepare the groundwork for an agrarian economy wherein land ceases to be a marketable commodity and where the individual works

9. Vinoba, *Bhoodan Ganga*, Vol. I, p. 18.

to attain the good of the entire community. This is just one step towards the realisation of real democracy or "Swaraj" by setting right the inverted structure of economic centralization through practices based on the principles of Love and Non-violence. Decentralization of political as well as economic power is the essence of the movement.

(1) **An Inverted Pyramid**

The economic structure of our society resembles an inverted pyramid.¹⁰ The millions of the have-nots and the landless at the base are at present unable to form into any concrete or solid foundation for a permanent and stable economic structure. It is of paramount importance that the base of the structure must be broadened by uniting the poor masses and the top heavy layers suitably built in conformity with the basic structure. The upper levels of the economic structure are broad with heavy concentration of economic power and the bottom levels are narrowed down to a mere point as each higher level from the bottom upwards broadens into increasing economic power.

At the village level, the pyramid-like structure begins with the landless masses at the base, with the poor peasants, rich peasants and big land owners above them in that ascending order. This conical economic structure does not admit of any advantages or benefits of the government schemes and projects ever "percolating" down to the landless and the poor peasants. The benefits are sucked out at the level of the big land owners and rich peasants: little reaches down to the poor and nothing to the landless. Even the various land or tenancy reform measures have failed to benefit the latter. And out of this inverted economic structure of the village has constantly been drained out the wealth of the village through the outlets in the structure. These outlets have been the market, the village banker, the government customs and superstitions and intoxicants.¹¹

10. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Swaraj For the People*, p. 2.

11. S. Ram, *Vinoba and His Mission*, p. 212.

The result has been that the village has been reduced to a disparity unit where the few who own land don't work upon it while a large number who work do not own the land they cultivate.

(2) The Need and Technique of Reversion

Obviously, such a structure, whether on the level of the economy as a whole or on the village level, cannot be stable: nor can it be conducive to higher production and to the establishment of a balanced community life. It is necessary, therefore, that the broad upper levels of the structure are sawed off and large portions of the vast upper floors of the pyramid are brought down to earth so that the structure could become a real, normal pyramid, narrow at the top and broad at the bottom. That involves the process of economic decentralization.¹²

How to discover ways and means whereby the landless millions may obtain land, or in other words, how to revert the inverted pyramid back to a normal structure? The method and approach of the Bhoodan movement indicates the guidelines for the technique of reversion. Thus it is that the technique adopted is one based on love and non-violence and involves voluntary surrender and mutual sharing. It is essentially the typical Bhoodan way of accomplishing tasks—the way of love and persuasion.

Vinoba has contended that the problem of the landless should be solved first as it would provide a solid foundation to the village economic structure. Every one must have land to till and to make one's living. For this it is that ownership of land, property or resources must be recognised as Nature's or God's, that one who consumes must do some productive physical labour and that the vast differences between wages or salaries must go. The Bhoodan, therefore, requires the big land owners to give as much land as they can, keeping with them what they require for their self-cultivation; the demand from the rich peasants is one-sixth

12. Narayan, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

of their land and the poor peasants are also asked to donate whatever they can as a token of their acceptance of the Bhoodan. As it is a "Yajna", it preaches the negation of the instinct of "acquisitiveness" or ownership of land, it stands for the provision of the means of production to the producer, it initiates all to the spirit of dedication in each and every activity and it requires that one should be concerned about the welfare of one's hungry neighbour and so long as he is in distress, one should eschew the temptation to enjoy happiness oneself. And as it is a "Dan", it contends for the just and equitable distribution of land among one and all; it requires the donor of land to do his duty towards himself and his neighbours; it claims to be a right of the landless poor who have been deprived of land on account of a vicious economic system and it insists that all should work on land and none should keep it who does not work.

(3) **The Nascent Economy**

Economic decentralization is thus one of the ends of the movement. The ultimate objective is the setting up of decentralized self-sufficient units where the villagers would decide their affairs themselves. But first things first and hence the first priority to the problem of land.

It is interesting to visualize the economy envisaged by the Bhoodan movement. The communitarian society of the movement would be based on co-operation and co-sharing;¹³ its unit would be the individual worker; its aim would be the welfare of all and each of its members and it would subserve the objective of a balanced and all-sided development of its components.

The economy of such a communitarian society would be a balanced economy, particularly careful about the non-renewable resources of nature. It would not be wasteful in the sense that it would try to restrict consumption as far as

13. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy*, ed. B. Prasad, p. 219.

possible to renewable resources and use as little as possible of the resources it cannot put back.

This nascent economy is most likely to be of small-machine, labour-intensive type. It would be agro-industrial in character evidencing an organic blending of agriculture and industry. It would naturally aim at the full utilization of local and regional resources to the satisfaction of the local and regional needs.

This economy would tend to be self-sufficient.¹⁴ In the nascent stage it would engage in production for self-consumption. It would be so organised that the basic material needs are satisfied as near at home as possible. Planning in a nascent communitarian society would naturally begin from below. That would imply that the unit of planning would be the village development plan prepared by the Gram Sabha comprising of a member from each family in the village.

In such an economy, the position of the worker would be pivotal since work would be the most essential thing for the life of the community. And work here would be a meaningful expression of human powers because the worker would be a responsible participant in the work process having a stake therein. Over-specialization is ruled out while the agro-industrial nature of the community would allow him to follow a diversified occupation. A large part of industry and commerce is apt to be co-operative or owner-worker type.

III. THE EVOLUTION OF NON-VIOLENT ECONOMY

To revert to the evolutionary aspect of a non-violent economy, one may take a clue from Nature. The secret of Nature's permanency lies in the cycle of life by which the various factors function in close co-operation to maintain the continuity of life. Self-interest and self-preservation demand complete non-violence, co-operation and submission to the ways of Nature if permanency is to be maintained by non-interference and by not short-circuiting the cycle of

14. *Ibid.*, p. 220,

life. If the cycle of life is broken, violence results which in turn hampers growth and retards development finally leading to waste and destruction. It is in the interest of self-preservation and all-round growth that one must find out ways and means of co-operating as satisfactorily as possible with the order of the day in Nature and thus be able to avoid needless violence and contribute to greater happiness by working towards, what may be called, an Economy of permanence.¹⁵

(1) **The Economies of Nature**

The various types of Economy as they obtain in Nature, i.e., the parasitic, the predatory, the economy of enterprise, of gregation and of service,¹⁶ may be applied to man. In the parasitic and predatory economies, the prime characteristics are selfish intentions at the cost of harm or injury to others, emphasis on rights at the expense of duties and violence. The chief test of an economy of enterprise is that, benefit and contribution therein are correlated with a readiness to take risk. The economy of gregation is characterised by a motivation for the group-interest as against individual self-interest. The economy of service depends upon the contribution without regard to any benefit received by the worker: it is based on love and a deep desire to serve without reward and it is designed to bring non-violence and peace and make for permanence.

It is the economy of Service making for peace, permanence and non-violence that the Bhoodan aims at. In this economy, the sense of duty, not only to those of the group but to all creatures, pervades the whole. The motivation here is the good of others even if it may be seemingly detrimental to self-interest. The emphasis in this economy is more on duties than on rights. It is based on love and spirit of service and self-sacrifice. Obviously, the more are actions in an economy based on spiritual appraisal and dedication that

15. J.C. Kumarappa, *Economy of Permanence*, p. 4.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-10.

insures valuation of objects in their true setting and perspective, the purer will be the life of the community and surer would be the foundations of the road to the economy of permanence, leading the community to happiness and peace through the medium of non-violence.

(2) **The Ancient Heritage**

The concept of the non-violent economy can be traced back to the traditions of the economic and social structure in ancient India. The philosophy of Sarvodaya has been with us in some form or the other since the earliest days of our civilization. The fundamentals of this philosophy are based on a sincere attempt to understand the needs of others and on mutual agreement and voluntary renunciation. The Upanishads, the Mahabharat and Kautilya's Arthshastra openly declare for the welfare of all human beings without distinction whatsoever.¹⁷ A spirit of sacrifice and suffering has always been the basis of Aryan Culture which started with the individual and lighted the way for individuals to work out their salvation through a regulated life of self-fulfilment and self-sacrifice. The Upanishads carried the guarantee of a rational economic order wherein production was not an end in itself but was ultimately subordinated to the primary needs of consumption. The system of village self-government was the foundation and the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of others and a philosophy of Sarvodaya were the characteristic features of the Aryan polity and social order.

The ancient Indian concept of wealth took into consideration the correlation between wealth, want and sacrifice.¹⁸ It is suggested in the ancient literature that accumulation of individual wealth should be accompanied by a sense of moral and social welfare. The productive organisation of the ancient Aryan society had its own ideology and form. It was an ideology in which moral values predominated. The moral law was a standing safeguard against

17. *Mahabharata*—Shantiparv, 262/9 and Kautilya, *Arthshastra*, 1/5.

18. *Ishavasyopanishad*, 1.

poverty and starvation and a guarantee for equitable distribution of wealth. The economic philosophy of the Rig Vedic hymns suggested an equitable distribution of food resources of the country. Several hymns of the Rig Veda¹⁹ emphasize distribution of food and wealth among those that are needy.

A philosophy of work throughout life is very old in this country. The Vedic hymns indicate an active life of hard work for a hundred years. The dignity of labour was a consecrated and widely accepted principle. Social and economic life was free from class of interests and the so-called class war. The class struggle as well as the struggle among individuals can be avoided if attention is given to the directions of Atharva Veda to earn wealth with hundred hands but to distribute the same with one thousand hands;²⁰ so that a fair and equitable distribution of wealth could be brought about.

Thus considerations of morality in economic behaviour were of fundamental importance in ancient India. The philosophy of class war and class hatred did not find a place in the ancient socio-economic order. The welfare of all was the guiding principle of economy. The ideal of equality was likewise held high and it was to be achieved or implemented through persuasion, mutual understanding, love and social consciousness.

(3) **The Gandhian Dawn**

It was to these glorious traditions of the ancient heritage that Gandhi harked back: it was there that he discovered the roots of a true welfare economy. With him as it were, the ancient Indian values and concepts were reborn with renewed vigour. He adapted the age-old principles to the problems of his day and made them the ground-work and the instrument of the social revolution and change that he sought to bring about.

19. *Rig Veda* 10-48 11 and 10-117 and 6.

20. *Atharva Veda*, 3-5-24/5.

Anything Gandhian must necessarily be a derivative of truth and non-violence. Therefore, Gandhian economics must be economics purged of untruth and violence. In the economy of Gandhi's conception man is the outstanding consideration and the actions of man are motivated by truth, love, self-sacrifice and renunciation. Moral considerations are of supreme importance in this economy and ethical value has been attached to all forms of human behaviour. The outlook that governs man's economic actions is characterised by not the desire of getting what one can but by the precept of declining to receive what all cannot get.

To Gandhi, life is a complete and integrated whole and the economic activities of man must form part of the all-round welfare of all. He said that the whole gamut of man's activities constituted one indivisible whole and social, economic and even religious work could not be divided into watertight compartments. Gandhian economics, therefore, may not be absolutely a science but it is certainly a practicable art of welfare living. He maintained and emphasized that the search for material comforts leads to a dead end since the real progress of the people and nations has to have a spiritual basis.

As the father of non-violence, so to speak, Gandhi tried to evolve a socio-economic order in which the principles of love, self-sacrifice and renunciation were to be used as norms both of daily living and human behaviour. He made love and non-violence instruments of an all-embracing social revolution.

Thus it is that the ancient traditions of the Aryan Culture have sprawled over the bounds of ages and have again reappeared as the golden threads in the fabric of Gandhiji's thought. The principles of Truth, Love and Non-Violence that form the fundamentals of Gandhian way of life and living are a revival or a re-awakening of the cultural heritage of ancient India.

(4) The Vinobian Quest

It has fallen to the lot of Vinoba to give a practical shape

to Gandhi's principles. Not that Gandhi had not evolved the concept of an economy based on his enunciated principles, but his political pre-occupations somehow precluded the translation of those principles into practice. Vinoba, as the spiritual successor of Gandhi, picked up the thread where the master had left it and went ahead with experimenting with the concrete manifestations of the universal principles of love and sacrifice.

The application of these principles in the socio-economic sphere brought home to Vinoba the curious fact that it was the right of ownership engendered by the insatiable instinct of acquisitiveness that was at the root of all economic and social ills. That is why his Bhoodan movement aims not merely at the transfer and redistribution of land from the landed to the landless, but its ultimate objective has been the complete abolition of the deep-rooted concept of ownership, whether of land, capital or skill.

The quest of Vinoba, therefore, is for the establishment of new values in society. The land-gift-mission is just an external symbol of the aimed transformation of the innermost values of human behaviour. The ultimate end is the evolution of an economy based on the principles of love, renunciation and sacrifice wherein the good of the individual shall consist in the welfare of all. The structure of such a communitarian economy shall have an extended family pattern, its character would be all-inclusive, its behaviour well grounded in voluntary surrender and mutual sharing and its end the greatest good of one and all.

II

Samya-Yoga and Kanchan-Mukti

Gandhiji consumed himself to realise his long cherished dream of Swarajya and strived persistently to attain Sarvodaya which means the greatest good to one and all. He proved the efficacy and potentialities of soul force as against coercive or violent force to attain independence and remove inequality between one man and another. His saintly efforts in politics succeeded tremendously, culminating in India's freedom. But the technique of Ahimsa was yet to be tested in the field of economics. Gandhi could not live long for this task. The light went out soon after the advent of freedom. His sudden departure from our midst turned people's eyes towards his disciple Vinoba for guidance. As the master's spiritual heir, Vinoba was to show the way to truth and non-violence, to individual, social and economic life. Boldly he accepted the challenge of the world and dedicated himself earnestly to the new task ahead. The attainment of Swarajya to which Vinoba had contributed in no small measure did not make him rest on his laurels. Instead, like a true Karmyogi he set himself to the quest of Sarvodaya. The following pages will reveal how magnificent has been his success and to what an amazing extent his unshakable faith in the Hindu maxim सर्वमृतहिते रताः' has found its natural expression in Vinoba's life and work.

I. VINOBAJI'S INTERPRETATION OF SAMYA-YOGA AND THE CONCEPT OF SARVODAYA

Vinobaji came forward with his thesis that the world belongs to the people whose voice will hereafter be

supreme. The present age demands equality; equality as between friends and comrades. Vinobaji is out to build the Sarvodaya order or what he calls the "Samya-Yoga" (disciplined equality). He has based his philosophy on the four verses of the Gita which are mentioned below:

1. The yogi, who is united in identity with the all pervading, infinite consciousness, and look on all with an equal eye, sees the self present in all beings, and all beings existing in the self.
2. He who sees Me (the universal self) present in all beings, and sees all beings existing in Me, I am never out of sight of him, nor is he ever out of sight of Me.
3. He who, established in unity worships Me as residing in all beings (as their very self), that Yogi, though engaged in all forms of activities, dwells in Me.
4. Arjun, he who looks on all as one, on the analogy of his own self, and looks upon the pleasures and pain of all with a similar eye, such a Yogi is regarded as supreme.¹

Relying on the above verses, Vinobaji holds that there are three requisites for 'Samya-Yoga' society. He points out that out of these verses there has emerged a basic concept of a unique social order. These verses bring him to the following conclusions:

1. No power should be dominant in society; there should only be a discipline of good thought.
2. All faculties of the individual are to be dedicated to the society which must provide the individual with equal opportunity of growth and development.
3. The moral, social and economic values of all the callings performed honestly, should be the same.

1. *Srimadbhagavad Gita*, VI. 29-32.

The philosophy of Samya-Yoga maintains that there dwells in every man the same spirit. It makes no distinction between man and man. People have up to the present regarded themselves as owners of the wealth they might have. This has produced a clash of interests between different groups. Vinobaji's Bhoodan movement aims to replace this idea of private ownership of wealth by the trusteeship idea in the interest of the society—an ideal according to which all that we have is for the service of the society and not for serving our narrow selfish ends. Thus Samya-Yoga helps to bring about economic and moral upliftment. In the "Samya-Yoga" ideal, every village will be a state by itself. The centre will have only nominal authority over it. Thus gradually a time will come when every kind of authority would have become unnecessary. The over-dominating authority will fade away and a perfectly free society would take birth. According to Samya-Yoga every man who works for the society to the best of his ability has a right to livelihood. All the works which are the acts of service to society must carry equal value. Every one must get full opportunity for development. If this view is put into practice villages would become self-sufficient and be in a position to produce their primary needs locally.

II. THE MEANING AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SAMYA-YOGA

"What kind of economic revolution would take place in accordance with the principles of Samya-Yoga?" Vinobaji was once asked to answer, and he replied:

"The man who will act according to his capacity will get according to his needs. A blind person, if he works to his utmost capacity, is authorised to get all his amenities from the society, even though he produces less in quantity in comparison to the persons gifted with eyesight." In the modern economy the services of labour are differently measured from those of moral services. Moreover, there

has been a rift between the physical and mental values of labour. These differences in valuation are as a matter of fact baseless. The philosophy of Samya-Yoga has the basis of disciplined equality. Therefore, in the economic sphere too, it does not accept any kind of inequality between man and man. There can only be a difference in the kind of services. But people have to ensure that every service finds an equal return. "Equality means", observed Vinoba, "the similar economic values of the different kinds of services rendered to society. Just as the five fingers of a hand act differently, little or more, so is the case with the services performed by individuals in society. It is futile, rather impossible, to measure in terms of economic value, the services of each finger separately. Which finger has more economic value when all play together upon a harmonium?"³ Thus according to Samya-Yoga, there is no difference between one service and the other. The services of a barber are no less important than that of a lawyer.⁴ Both would be treated equally in this society. But the difference of income in the services in "modern economy" have led to unfavourable development of those groups. Such as the frequent change of services on the part of man anxious to receive better emoluments. The Samya-Yoga attempts to abolish this economic disparity. Dilating upon its importance, Vinobaji once cited the example of mother and said, "Mother represents the best form of Samya-Yoga. She loves her children equally. But she will distribute differently the bread between her sons aged twenty and five. If one is sick he will have greater share of milk. This is not discrimination but an act of wisdom."⁵

The basic philosophy of Samya-Yoga, therefore, provides a way of life. It is above all "isms". It differs from the popular socio-economic orders, namely, capitalism, social-

3. Vinoba, Speeches. As Cited by D.D. Moondara, *Sarvodaya Pad Yatra*, p. 13.

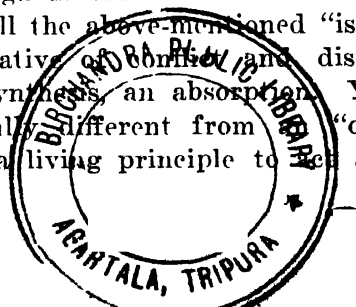
4. M.K. Gandhi, *Sarvodaya*, ed. B. Kumarappa, p. 3.

5. Vinoba, "Ekmatra Adhar : Sarvodaya", *Bhoodan Yajna*, II-42 (20-7-56), p. 3.

ism and communism. All these "isms" claim to establish an efficient society and provide man with all the amenities of life and better treatment.

Take the case of capitalism. It observes that men are not equal in their efficiencies. So those who are more efficient should be given priority in work and employment. The capitalistic economy aims to establish a society on the basis of efficiencies and the different remunerations are paid accordingly. This has created a great rift between the majority of the famished and the low paid on the one hand and the highly paid, corrupt few on the other. Capitalism offers no cure for this except allowing the growing disparity to continue in which the poor tend to grow poorer and the rich richer. Therefore, the world today is enveloped in a heavy gloom. Socialism, on the other hand, thrives on coercive power as against soul force and morality and hampers the inner growth of man. The individual identity is lost in the state and man becomes a tool of the totalitarian government. Communism, again, is based on the theory of class struggle. It observes that human history so far has been the play of the tragic conflict between two classes, the masters and the slaves, the exploiters and the exploited, the haves and the have-nots. In the present stage of human history these two classes are the capitalists and the workers, and unless this conflict is abolished, economic equality can never be achieved. Communists think that there is no other way to achieve the goal, except by removing this struggle and totally taking away the powers from the hands which hold it. Their actions are violent and tragic. Hence they cannot establish peace in the world. Violence is always reactionary. It begets more violence and destruction. And this is not all—it destroys the dignity and the value of man as man.

Samya-Yoga is based on the humanitarian outlook. It differs from all the above-mentioned "isms". "Isms", in fact, are the derivative of conflict and disruption, while Yoga indicates a synthesis, an absorption. Yoga assumes a form which is totally different from "order". It signifies a way of life; a living principle to live and die for. Samya-



Yoga envisages a higher human integration or "Samanvaya". It is the egalitarian outlook of Sarvodaya. "Samya-Yogi society disregards the age-old laws of economics, the out-dated rules of society and the worn-out and stagnant set-up of the age which do not behove the dignity of modern man: A Samya-Yogi sees with equal emphasis everything in the image of his own. When he desires good to himself, he desires good to all. This aspect is called as "Atama-upamya."⁶ Samya-Yoga, in short, maintains that all men are equal and they must strive for "antah Shuddhi" by dedicating to the society all that they have for the cause of the total welfare. This, in brief, is the economic significance of Samya-Yoga.

III. VINOBAJI'S CONCEPT OF DAN: THE IDEA RELATING TO FIVE GIFTS

(1) Meaning of the Word Dan

Vinobaji has a great talent for coining words and investing old words with new meanings. Thus "dan" in his vocabulary does not mean gifts but "Sharing together". That is his rendering of His Holiness Shankaracharya's definition "danam Sam Vibhagah." Vinobaji says, "The word 'Dan' which I use has been subjected to much criticism, but few of us try to understand its real meaning. Jagat Guru Shankaracharya has said that Dan means equitable distribution. Dan is our daily duty. It leads us to perform the function of distributive economy."⁷

Again, emphasising the word "Dan", Vinobaji observes that if people forget the words and their connotations which are deep rooted in Indian soil and adopt vague terms and expressions of the west, they shall lose their real import. Yajna, Dan and Tap together constitute a triple function to be performed by every individual. If people do away with these, their life will become as dry as sand dunes. The prophets who worked here were deeply steeped in Indian cul-

6. V.N.K. Reddy, *Sarvodaya Ideology and Vinoba Bhawe*, p. 53.

7. Vinoba, *Triveni*, p. 9.

ture and philosophy. The Gita has given the vision, the strength and the power to interpret them correctly. How can India see a non-violent revolution by discarding the old Vedic concepts?

So the meaning of the word "Dan" must be clearly understood. Dan has so far meant giving of something by some one to the other as an act of piety or spending something for the sake of one's own good in the other world. However, Vinobaji is using it in a different sense. It means a distribution based on justice and equity as one finds among the different members in a joint family. It is in this sense of equitable distribution that Vinobaji employs the word Dan.

What the term "Dan" usually implies is that the donor is the owner of the thing donated and has the full right to keep it with him. But Bhoodan implies that men have no right to keep more land than what they really stand in need of. Different factors have contributed to its coming into the possession of the people who are keeping it. This is, however, a mistake which must be rectified. Likewise, the donee who receives land should not think that what was denied to him on account of his poverty or distress was being given to him by others out of grace or as an obligation. He must on the other hand feel that he is entitled to get it as his right.

One must here note that "Dan" does not mean charity. It really means equal distribution. Vinobaji has made this abundantly clear. Since all the land belongs to God, it clearly means that the tiller alone has a right to use it. So what Vinobaji is demanding is only justice. He wants the present land owners to offer their land for equal distribution. Vinoba is not a beggar taking something by way of charity or gift. Pointing out the fact Vinobaji once remarked, "I am not a beggar. I provide you with a new line of thinking. Donation to me means acceptance of Sarvodaya ideology by the donor, i.e., agreeing to the view of just and equal distribution of wealth."⁸

When Vinobaji uses the word "Dan" he takes its Vedic concept. It appeals not only to the mind but also to the heart. Many interpret it as an act of sacrifice which annihilates the self by keeping the identity of the other. Thus Vinobaji has used the word Dan not in its superstitious sense but as a practical and profound concept. He demands Dan because:

- (a) It leads to just and equal distribution of wealth.
- (b) It reminds man of his daily duty towards the society.
- (c) It creates an atmosphere of love and piety and enables the poor to share their own right of land.

Thus in Bhoodan the word Dan has a special significance. Vinobaji says that land like air, water and light belongs to all. It is a free gift of Nature. How can any one has a right to own it? Land has a social value and can never be a private property of an individual. In the beginning it may be owned by a village or a group as a whole but in the last resort it will be distributed according to the growing necessities of the society at large. Therefore, those political or legal institutions which have given sanction to the persons to own large holdings are totally unjustified. It is so because these institutions are out to acquire power through exploitation. Here Vinobaji with his new outlook wants to bring a change in the social values. Dan is not begging but a rightful demand of one's share. Thus Vinobaji has come forward to the service of Daridranarain, calling himself as the "sixth son" and demanding one-sixth of his share in land. Interpreting his mission at Arrah in the district Shahabad, Bihar, on September 17, 1962, Vinobaji said:

Ours is the land of Kisan (peasants) and we idealize 'Krishna'; Krishna means Kisan. But to-day the condition is such that we have to import foodgrains. Why is it so? Only because we have deprived the right owner of his land. Therefore, it now becomes our duty to return him at least one-sixth of the land and property as his share. Our saints have said

‘We should give one-sixth share to the king to look after the land’. Who is the king now-a-days in India? It is our Kisan. So he should be given his right share.’

(2) Dan Through Love and Not By Force

Vinobaji does not demand dan by force or without love. He believes in Ahimsa and never compels the person to give if he is not willing to do so. But his teachings and moral force impel the donors themselves to sign the Danpatra. He always reminds the people in the words of the Upanishad:

“Give by love but not without love. Give by capacity, by shame, by fear, by reason.”⁹

Vinoba observes that present age is the age of a new awakening. The landless have realised their rights and powers. So Dan is the humble act of asking the big landlord to give away the due share of the landless from their property and assist the movement of non-violent revolution. This is the demand of the age and now is right moment to donate for the needy. What is use of sharing the property by force in the last resort? Those who do not give today will have to give tomorrow not to us but to others in a violent way but that will be without love and hence improper, as in the words of the Gita:

“The gift which is made at an improper place and time in a disrespectful and insulting manner to undeserving person is said to be Tamsic.”¹⁰ According to Vinobaji such a dan is not acceptable. Therefore, Bhoodan or land through love has a special significance. Vinoba has advocated that Dan should be in the service of Daridranarain and the time has now come to recognise it. In the Gita Lord Krishna has said:

“The gift which is made to one who does nothing in return, with the idea that it is one’s duty to give, and with

9. Vinoba, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

10. *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 1/11.

11. *Srimadbhagvad Gita*, XVII, 22,

due regard to the place, time and recipient of the gift, is said to be Sattvic."¹²

Thus it is that Vinoba approaches people for land gifts with love, humility and reasoning. He has set before the people three principles:

(a) He does not mind it if a person does not give land even after understanding its significance. For, he believes that one who does not give today will give tomorrow. The seed of thought sown in his heart is bound to bear fruit some day.

(b) If one gives with understanding he feels happy, because it creates deep and far-reaching goodwill.

(c) If someone gives without grasping the idea behind it and under pressure he does not feel happy. Vinoba does not want to grab land but to create the sentiment of Sarvodaya and Samya-Yoga in society.

(3) The Idea Relating Five Gifts

Vinoba has not used the word "Dan" for his land gift mission alone. He has created some other types of dans, namely, Sampatti dan, Shramdan, Buddhidan, etc. According to our five senses there are five types of possessions which we enjoy. These are: the heart the brain, the physique, the property—movable and immovable. All these possessions correspond to one or the other senses in a man. He is the storehouse of love, wisdom, and labour. He might also possess land and money. Vinobaji says that when people have such possessions, why should they not distribute them among their fellow men? The rich persons must compensate the deficiencies of the poor. Similarly, those who are educated must impart knowledge to the illiterate. Vinoba calls upon his country-men to come forward and offer their possessions to the society. They may donate Prem, Buddhi, Bhoomi, Sampatti or Shram whatever they have with them. Behind all these stands the same ideology of Sarvodaya society. What these gifts mean can be summed up as follows:

- (i) Bhoodan Yajna—to change the basic concept of the ownership of the property is the first step and generating self-sufficient village economy is the ultimate aim.
- (ii) Sampattidan—to purify the livelihood pattern, discarding the accumulation of wealth and abolishing unproductive labour and its trade.
- (iii) Shramdan Yajna—to establish the dignity of labour and love, purity and interest in work.
- (iv) Premdan—it is a purely human and moral act, requiring one to love thy neighbour as thyself.
- (v) Buddhidan—those who are intellectually equipped but are poor and frail can devote some of their time every day to help others with their knowledge and wisdom. Persons like teachers, doctors and lawyers can easily offer their free service for the good of the society.

IV. THE PHILOSOPHY OF YAJNA AND VINOBAJI'S WAYS OF ECONOMIC ACTIONS

(1) **Meaning of the Word Yajna**

Just as Vinobaji uses the word “Dan” with its Vedic interpretation, in the same way he uses the word “Yajna”. He has also elaborated its idea in Talks on Gita. In short he explains as follows:

Since birth men are attached to three institutions:

- (a) The universe of which they are a part.
- (b) The society in which they are born.
- (c) The existing constitution of man with body, soul and wisdom.

And Yajna performs three different actions:

The First Action. In daily activities men are enjoying the fruits of creation. The loss entailed by such utilization is compensated by sacrifice or Yajna.

The Second Action. In course of the ordinary pursuits of life man, by creating squalor, contaminates both himself and the society. Yajna is the only means of purification.

The Third Action. The repayment for the services of society enjoyed through any productive labour.

So the action for repayment of services to society is called "Dan". Renunciation that purifies the body, the soul and the mind is the real Tap (Austerity). And the efforts made to compensate the society for the advantages received from it constitute Yajna (Sacrifice). Of course, through Bhoodan Vinoba calls for both Yajna and Dan. But unless people take to Tap the fulfilment of Yajna and Dan will remain a dream. These three together constitute one indivisible whole. It is for the workers of the Bhoodan movement to do Tap. Yajna and Dan are expected from the people. It is for the worker of the movement to intensify all the three in due course.

(2) Yajna in Relation to Land

In the Bhoodan movement, the word "Yajna" involves threefold action, namely, compensation, purification and reconstruction. It is on this basis that the movement is named "The Bhoodan Yajna". The ways of economic actions inherent in it may be explained as follows:

(a) **Compensation.** The acute land problem and the destruction of cottage industries have led to a great loss to society as well as to hunger, poverty and unemployment. The Bhoodan Yajna lays emphasis on the equitable distribution of land and on the establishment of village industries. Thus it compensates the society by giving a fresh life to the arrested economic development.

(b) **Purification.** The Bhoodan Yajna has generated compassion and love in human heart. It has raised a mass opinion in favour of the abolition of private property and has purified the overall thinking. In Bhoodan it is not what one gives that matters but the giver's "Bhavna" that adequately speaks of his dignity and the voice of his soul.

Vinobaji's technique of the "conversion of heart" and its Bhavna is the essence of the philosophy of the Bhoodan Yajna.

(c) **Reconstruction.** The Bhoodan Yajna claims to reconstruct a Samya-Yogi Society wherein at the last stage the state shall wither away. It aims to construct a self-reliant society basing itself purely on self-help, bodily labour and disciplined equality.

Thus the word Yajna which means "sacrifice" has been used by Vinobaji because he desires that people should discard the feeling of ownership of land and do whatever they can for improving the lot of the poor. The initial producer, i.e., the cultivator must not be denied the means of his livelihood—the land. All the villagers should live like brothers with the spirit of dedication for each other. Yajna, in Bhoodan movement, should not be regarded as an act of charity but as an act of duty enjoined on those who possess land to serve God—embodied in the form of the poor—*Daridra-narain*. It is a sort of dedication to the society of the possessions which one has for their better and proper use. By performing Yajna the rich are purged of their sordid lust for earthly possessions and the poor of their grinding poverty. Thus both the rich and the poor will win in this spiritual-cum-economic game. It is in this sense that the word Yajna has been used by Vinobaji.

V. VINOBAJI AND HIS KANCHAN-MUKTI YOGA: THE VINOBIAN ECONOMICS OF SHRAM AND TAP

Among the factors of production land is to be redistributed through Bhoodan. Capital and labour being the other dominating forces remain now to be considered. Vinoba's "Kanchan Mukti" is an experiment through dignified labour in the art of production. It can also be called his experiment with Tap. Literally though means freedom from gold, its main interpretation is to get rid of "Tamas" (Sloth) and find out the ways and means to increase productive resources and live through bodily labour intelligently performed.

(1) **Tamas and the Philosophy of Tap**

Long before the Bhoodan movement, Vinobaji was observing Tap—his experiment with bodily labour. Dedicating his whole life to the cause of Sarvodaya, Vinoba turned himself into a labourer. His living in Paunar Ashram was totally based on his own labour. It was a sort of experiment to investigate whether people can live on their labour alone without any outside help. Vinoba derived this inspiration from Gita. “Tap” to him does not mean solitary meditation or “Samadhi”. But it is a way to achieve social and economic potentialities for the development of the nation. “Tap” (labour) is highly necessary to overcome sloth. It is to keep body and mind intact for the good of the society thus gaining victory over the forces of “Tamas Vritti”. “The Gita has interpreted”, observed Vinoba, “Yajna, Dan and Tap as great social virtues. It is for the workers of the Bhoodan movement to do ‘Tap’ as the people in general are engaged in Dan and Yajna.”¹³

Tamas destroys the inner capabilities of man¹⁴ and so he must strive to get rid of it. Vinoba has told two methods to conquer it: bodily labour and mental alertness.¹⁵ These together form the foundation of Tap. Vinoba’s Bhoodan-Pad-Yatra and his thirst for knowledge clearly indicate how ably Vinobaji acts in accordance with the philosophy of “Tap”.

(2) **Kanchan-Mukti Yoga**

To convert the philosophy of Tap into action Vinoba decided to observe “Kanchan Mukti”. The aim of this step was clear: to lead the life of Asteya and Aparigrah. Its economic interpretation was to establish the dignity of labour and freedom from so-called money economy. Everybody who eats must live on bodily labour. Another word for this experiment is “Nidhi-Mukti”. Dada Dharmadhikari, a Sarvodaya leader, has described it as an act to dis-

13. Vinoba, *Speeches*. As cited by N. Deshpande, *Vinoba Ke Sath*, p. 142.

14. *Srimadbhagavad Gita*, XIV, 8 and 13.

15. Vinoba, *Talks on Gita*, pp. 213-16.

card the very basis of amassing wealth.¹⁶ This is possible if people decide to live on "bodily labour".¹⁷ It is another form of the Bread-labour concept of Gandhiji which means that to live man must work. It implies physical labour to earn the bread, not the intellectual labour. "The needs of the body must be supplied by bodily labour. Mere mental, i.e., intellectual labour is for the soul and its own satisfaction".¹⁸ It is the rendering of the religious saying "in the sweat of thy brow shall thou eat thy bread". It signifies the same principle which has been set forth in the third chapter of the Gita where we are told that he who eats without offering sacrifice eats stolen food.¹⁹

Vinobaji's decision of "Kanchan-Mukti Yoga" was at first personal but ultimately it grew to be a social programme. Bhoodan movement itself has the same ideal of non-possession. In Paunar Ashram Vinobaji was successfully carrying on with his programme when in 1951 the idea of Bhoodan flashed upon his mind and since then it has become an instrument of social transformation. Bhoodan does not merely mean transfer of land from one hand to another, but it is a philosophy of creating non-violent revolution in society. It tries to establish equity between ends and means,²⁰ and removes all chances of exploitation. In the field of production labourers and capitalists have a clash of interests. They differ in ideologies. The only way to remove this antagonism is to unite them coherently. Vinobaji offers his programmes to individuals as "Kanchan-Mukti" and to the society as "Nidhi-Mukti". It will later on form a "Tantra-Mukti" or stateless society. Vinobaji reiterates the importance of his approach in bringing about a change in the modern set-up. How his quest will open new vistas and establish a non-violent economic order, shall form the subject matter of the subsequent chapters dealing with the dynamic economy of Bhoodan.

16. "Nidhi-Mukti Aur Tantra-Mukti...", *Bhoodan Yojna*, III-18 (1-2-57), p. 1.

17. Gaudhi, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

19. *Srimadbhagavad Gita*, III, 10-12.

20. *Bhoodan Yajna*, III-32 (10-5-57), p. 3.

PART TWO

The Dynamic Economy

III



Birth of the Bhoodan Movement



I. INDIA ON THE EVE OF BRITISH DEPARTURE

The day India attained her political freedom marked the beginning of a new era and offered her responsibilities of quite a different order. It was a difficult task for the country to organise its social and economic life in the context of the developing and ever-changing world. India was not well prepared to take on the new task. Two centuries of British rule had practically shattered the economy of the country in more than one ways. The village autonomy was broken and replaced by a new system of political organisation in which village units were the least recognised. The cottage industries were annihilated and the self-reliant economy was reduced to an economy of dependence and subjection. The Britishers left the country in turmoil. The situation was aggravated by the ill-conceived demand of the Muslims for an independent state which culminated in the division of this sub-continent into two parts: India and Pakistan. There was no geographical justification for the creation of the binary country, Pakistan, consisting of two isolated wings, the East Bengal and the West Punjab, separated by one thousand miles of Indian territory. It was a purely political decision based on the religion-founded two nation concept. But this theory could not stand the test of the time and the geographical absurdity of East Pakistan came to an end with the emergence of a democratic, secular and sovereign State of Bangla Desh.

The truncated India of 1947-48 had a shattered economy.

The division led to an unreasonable distribution of land and population. "As a result of the partition India had nearly 81 per cent of the total population of undivided India and nearly 77 per cent of the total area."¹ The net population influx was greater in India by 2.5 million persons in comparison to that in Pakistan. The country lost some of the finest wheat, rice and jute producing areas and added relatively a larger urban population.

Hardly had the ink dried on the partition deed, then the country faced a great influx of population—unprecedented in the history of the world. No body could have imagined that "more than sixteen million persons, i.e., more than twice the population of Australia or more than the entire population of Canada would be involved in the post-partition Indo-Pakistan migration."² This migration resulted in bloodshed and hatred and adversely affected the development of the nascent economy.

The colossal refugee problem was unparalleled in the human history. Never before had such mass transfer of population taken place. The country faced the "Great Displacement" of population in a short period of less than six months. It is said that 1.4 million Grecian people from Asia Minor and Turkey were once transferred after World War I, but that was achieved over a period of eighteen months.³ In this respect the great Indo-Pak migration of 1947-48 had the unique characteristics of suddenness, rapidity and vastness. It affected India more than Pakistan as the pressure of population of displaced persons was greater in India. The economy, as a consequence, was thrown out of gear.

The gloomy picture of independence was further darkened by the passing away of the father of the nation. The day of 30th January, 1948 marked the end of the earthly pilgrimage of Mahatma Gandhi. The apostle of peace and non-violence had to sacrifice himself to the bullet shot so

1. C.N. Vakil, *Economic Consequences of Divided India*, p. 24.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

that the unhappy chapter of Hindu-Muslim tension' might come to an end. But even after the great martyrdom this could not be achieved.

The sudden departure of Gandhiji was a telling blow to the nation. The newly independent state was in turmoil. There was no leader of such a magnitude who might guide the Country's destiny in the hours of peril and darkness. Though Gandhiji had created confidence and initiative in many persons, there was in fact nobody who could measure in heights such a great spiritual leader like him. It was a test for those who believed in the philosophy of Gandhi and his non-violent way of life.

II. THE ECONOMY AT CROSS-ROADS

The nation had to decide its future course of action. The first two years of independence were full of great trials and tribulations. The country was entrenched in heavy gloom due to the partition, the mass displacement of the population and the passing away of the Mahatma who stood for the people as the symbol of unity and led the country with his paramount leadership and sacrifice. The problems which confronted people those days left little time for them to think about national development and planning. However, some sporadic attempts were made by the people on the basis of an old Planning Committee and certain plans were put forth to change the structural pattern of the society. The Bombay Plan presented by a few industrialists, the People's Plan given by M. N. Roy, and the Gandhian Plan prepared by Shri Shriman Narain had provided for a line of action in the direction of a planned economy even before the independence. Time made it incumbent upon us thus to choose a system on the basis of which the Five Year Plans might be formulated.

The Indian economy was at the cross-roads. Straight in front of her was the far-away goal of hope and aspiration that required sustained labour and efforts for a systematic and comprehensive economic development. Several alternatives offered themselves. One was the "leftist" path of

“socialised” economic development with overwhelming state authority as its prime characteristic. The other was the “rightist” road of “highly independent” economic advancement with unrestricted individualism and liberty as its dominant features. India chose the middle path of democratic planning and cooperative endeavour which was supposed to suit her social set-up and was in conformity with her age-old traditions.

Village India, representing the spirit and traditions of ancient Indian life and culture, was plagued with poverty, hunger and landlessness. On the eve of Independence, the Indian peasantry presented a depressing spectacle. Out of every 1,000 agriculturists in 1951,⁴ 507 were agricultural land holders of all types and 402 landless agriculturists. The total number of agricultural labour households was 1.79 crores in 1950-51. The first and second Agricultural Labour Enquiry Reports⁵ had thrown considerable light on this matter. The average size of the agricultural labour households in 1950-51 was 4.30 persons and rose to 4.40 in 1956-57. The ratio of attached and casual labour households was 10 : 90 in 1950-51 which increased to 27 : 73 in 1956-57. The casual adult male workers remained unemployed for ninety days in 1950-51 and 128 days in 1956-57. The average daily wage of casual labour in 1950-51 was only 109 paise and went down to ninety-six paise in 1956-57.

As to the food position, the production declined from forty-four million tons in 1947-48 to forty-one million tons in 1948-49. This decline was primarily due to socio-technical limitations, structural defects in land management and the pattern of holdings. But a new system of land organisation was in the offing as the period of economic planning commenced with the adoption of First Five Year Plan in 1951. The main aim of the First Plan was to rehabilitate the economy from the devastations of war, partition and famine and formulate policies to build up institutions which would set the nation on the path of economic development. It was

4. G.O.I., *Census Report* 1951, Vol. I, Part 1-A and B, p. 227.

5. Relating to the Year 1950-51 and 1956-57.

also intended to initiate measures of equality and social justice.

The foremost problem of the country at this juncture was to fight against the forces of stagnation and recession in socio-economic relationships which meant an overall transformation of human values and institutional changes. The problem of land management and organization was to be tackled effectively as the first step in this direction.

III. SHAKING OFF LANDLORDISM

The age-old system of landlordism had to come to an end in this period of transition. The landlords so far had worked as the bulwark of the British rule in India. A system based on grants of villages and lease of lands to some influential and "loyal" persons for the payment of land revenue to the government was adopted first by the Mughals in a feudal form and then by the Britishers who not only created landlords but supported hundreds of dependent Indian rulers in their semi-feudal states. The Britishers could not mix with the masses and so their object was to create a new class of intermediaries for their own benefit.

The feudal system had adversely affected the whole economy of the country. The Britishers were interested only in retaining power and to some extent maintaining law and order through the rule of state without any developmental planning. They, therefore, patronized the landlords and created a class of exploiters. The village economy sank deep into the waters of stagnation. The unprecedented famine of 1943 of Bengal explains the discriminating policy in rushing supplies and negligence of villages under the British rule. The rural indebtedness was devastating and it remained a cradle-to-grave companion of the villagers. All this, therefore, called for some structural changes in the land management and organization. The abolition of Zamindari was a step towards this direction.

When the Congress came to power, it announced its agrarian policy of completely wiping out the feudal system

of land management. The method adopted was peaceful and slow. The Zamindari Abolition Acts were passed by different states with a provision for compensation to the affected landlords.

The government's decision of getting rid of intermediaries was intended to revitalize the rural organization and cultivation pattern. But unless the whole village structure was changed nothing concrete could have been achieved in the field of economic development.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF OFFICIAL AGENCIES

Though the feudal system was abolished by the state governments, a new class emerged in the form of "Rentiers". It has come into existence because the abolition of the intermediaries does not mean abolition of the rent receiving class.⁶ It is a class which contributes nothing to the production and yet derives income from the landed property. Though legally they are not intermediaries, they receive all the advantage due to the "middleman". The land is cultivated by hired labour and share-cropping is quite common. A system of "produce rent" or "labour rent" is prevalent even after the abolition of Zamindari. The private possession of land is recognised and the old intermediaries have been converted into the so-called "self-cultivating" agriculturists or "Sir" and "Khudkast". In Uttar Pradesh alone, this "private possession of the landlords constituted about six million out of thirty-three million acres of agricultural land. Thus nearly 15 per cent of the entire land was at the very outset declared as the private property of the old landlords".⁷

A democratic government that sanctions the right of ownership can never bring about legislation to the effect of completely abolishing private property. Though pledged for establishing democratic socialism, the government of India is unable to bring about that social order which demands a

6. Gyan Chand, *Socialist Transformation of Indian Economy*, p. 112.

7. Bhowani Sen, *Evolution of Agrarian Relations in India*, p. 192.

total transformation of property rights. A government by legislation cannot do that. It is possible only through some organised mass movement and well-trained public opinion. One cannot deny that feudalism in some form or other is still prevalent in our country. "Though its relative importance varies from state to state it is still a force which matters a lot. In all states, three-fourths of the rural population belongs to what is called the weakest section and is still living in an atmosphere of fear and pressure in which caste and feudal traditions combine to undermine their will to assert themselves...."⁸

The socialists and the communists hold views in favour of abolishing private ownership of the means of production and elimination of private profits from the economy of production. But "Socialism" in the context of our planning means neither the abolition of private ownership nor the establishment of collective ownership of land by the people. Thus the very purpose of socialism has been in this way defeated at the very outset.

The agrarian policies of the government have not been in conformity with the social frame-work of the country. The objectives of land reforms, therefore, could not be fully attained. Even the policy of "land to the tiller" is operating in reverse gear.⁹ There is still a stronghold of the rich over land because land is a marketable commodity. The big landlord of the old feudal system still possesses a powerful position.

The agrarian legislation thus did not provide enough protection and power to the poor peasants. Even after the abolition of Zamindari the old social and economic order remained unchanged. The greater problems of food production and self-sufficiency remained unsolved because no scientific improvements and collective efforts of the people were made in the field of agriculture. Under these circumstances, the need to evolve a new formula more dynamic than "state

8. Gyan Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

action" and more powerful in its appeal to the peasantry than any other programme for land reform became imperative. The government was helpless in bringing about an equitable distribution of land by peaceful means and so policies and programmes of land reforms did not achieve a fair measure of success.

Indian rural society thus demanded a radical change in its agrarian set-up based on a new outlook that accepted abolition of private ownership of the means of production, chiefly land. All the programmes sponsored by the government failed to touch upon this aspect of the problem—the change of outlook.

Legislation, obviously, could not provide an answer to the problems of agrarian reform so long as the concept of "land as a marketable commodity" was not done away with. This explains why, though some significant steps like Zamindari abolition and ceilings on land were taken, the lot of the small cultivator and the landless was no better. It is, therefore, said that land reforms had, obviously, not brought about any institutional changes in the structure of agrarian economy. A new awakening from within was needed to organise the rural economy and vitalize the cultivating class. Unless people's minds and hearts are changed what can the legislation do? In a community public sentiments play a very important role. With public sentiments nothing fails; without it nothing succeeds. Consequently, to this extent, moulding public sentiment is better than enacting laws.

It was on account of the inherent limitations of government action that a mass movement, bolstering the public opinion in favour of "land to the landless", was needed in the country. India, a peace-loving country, was thus to evolve a new application of non-violence for solving the economic problems. It was in this respect that the country received a light from Vinobaji who appeared on the scene as a spiritual heir of Mahatma Gandhi with his "gospel of land" for the benefit of the landless multitude. What salt was to Gandhi, land was to Vinoba. Land was only a symbol with him. Just as Dandi-March (1930) of Gandhiji focussed a

way out for a "political independence" Vinoba's "Land-Gift-Mission" lighted the new dawn on the Indian horizon for social, moral and economic independence.

V. SHIFTING OF NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENT FROM POLITICS TO ECONOMICS

Even in the wake of Independence, it was clear that political freedom must be followed with economic freedom. Not only was the pooling of resources for re-building the economy started with quickening vigour, but during the three years immediately after Independence, a lot of thinking was also done with a view to ascertaining the proper course for the growth and development of the Indian economy. There were two streams of thought regarding India's future—that of the planners who wanted India to travel the road of western industrialization and that of those followers of Mahatma Gandhi who accepted his "Constructive programme" of village republics. The former were active almost at once but the latter required a torch-bearer to show how the Gandhian principles of non-violence could be applied to economic problems. Gandhiji was no more there to execute his plans. Only his teachings and great achievements were testimony to the triumphs of and strength found in non-violence.

It was at this juncture that Vinoba appeared on the public platform. As Gandhiji's selected satyagrahi, he came forward to implement his programme of non-violent economic development. As a devotee of Ahimsa, Vinobaji accepted the challenge of the age and resolved to achieve the common objective of improving the conditions of millions living in India by peaceful means. Tracing the foot-steps of Mahatma Gandhi, he made it clear that the future of mankind depended upon non-violence. Vinobaji's Bhoodan Mission is one of the most remarkable steps towards the application of non-violence to economic problems. It aims at equitable distribution of land in a peaceful manner. Bhoodan movement brings the promise of a total revolution in land reforms and other economic policies. But Bhoodan does not

concern itself only with collecting and distributing land; it is an all-embracing revolution. Revolution does not mean merely transferring of power from one hand to another but an overall change in political, social and economic values and outlook through the practice of non-violence.

VI. FROM MAHATMA GANDHI TO VINOBA BHAVE

Rarely it is that in a country two great leaders are at work one after the other, both of the same prominence and spiritual magnitude. In India, this rare occurrence took place when after Gandhi, Vinoba took the torch of non-violence from him and coming out of his Ashram on a walking tour of India's villages, he not only threw new light on various problems of Rural India but found out radically new solutions based on a practical application of non-violence.

It was in the later years of Gandhiji's life that people often asked him to name his successor. He never answered in affirmative. But on one occasion Gandhiji brought the name of Vinoba as the first Satyagrahi in the year 1940. Gandhi was to disregard the authority of the alien government which was forcing the country to participate in the World War II. Vinoba was entrusted with the task of launching Civil Disobedience Movement as a protest against India's forced entry into the war. People were astonished at Gandhi's choice of Vinoba. They questioned themselves as to why Gandhiji chose such a "small fry" and an "unknown figure" for a task which could have been accomplished effectively only by some political leader of acknowledged prominence. But they "suffered" quite happily Gandhiji's decision as they trusted Bapu beyond question. Vinoba was the most obedient disciple of Gandhiji. The selection of Vinoba indicated that he was the most suitable person to carry out Gandhi's work and fulfil his mission. So the modest and simple Vinoba, one fine morning woke up and found himself famous. But nobody could imagine then that "a new Gandhi was born". Of all Gandhiji's disciples, none was so sacrificing and sincere as Vinobaji. He was one of Gandhi's most trustworthy followers who worked in silence

and dedicated his life for truth and non-violence. Gandhiji used to take help from Vinoba in matters of great importance. Vinoba's sincere humility and self-effacing habits had conquered the hearts of the people.

It was within six weeks of Gandhiji's death, in March 1948, that a number of constructive workers, leaders and Gandhiji's associates decided to hold a conference at Wardha under the Presidentship of Late Dr. Rajendra Prasad. All the Sarvodaya workers assembled there to discuss ways and means of implementing the last will or Testament of Bapu, i.e., of attaining social, moral and economic independence throughout the country. Vinoba at that conference proposed the formation of the Sarvodaya Samaj. The purpose of this Samaj was to speed up Gandhiji's constructive programme and build up a new India on the foundation of village republics. This was a step intended to combine all the Gandhian workers who were hitherto functioning separately without any common programme.

After the Sevagram Conference referred to above, Vinobaji went to Paramdham Ashram to contemplate his future course of action. He had a clear-cut idea regarding the basic need of a self-governing, enlightened and peace-loving Indian peasantry that would bring economic stability and self-reliance to the country as a whole.

Vinobaji knew that India's economy was stagnant and that her agrarian structure was in ruins. Most of the people were living in unhealthy conditions and appalling poverty. The majority of the peasants did not have sufficient land to make both ends meet. The village economy was sinking deeper and deeper into the quagmire of stagnation and the agriculturists were gradually being reduced to the status of the landless labourers.

Though, several States had passed the Zamindari Abolition Acts and land distribution laws but the medieval character of the economy was so paramount, and squalor, ignorance and poverty were so widespread, that nothing could really deliver the goods unless a radical change in the agrarian structural pattern was brought about. In this connec-

tion, hope could only be placed in the Gandhian constructive programmes which helped in bringing about changes in village structural pattern by means of persuasion and change of heart.

Vinoba gave three years of contemplation (1949-51) to evolve a new formula of land distribution and co-operative living. These years, for him, were of great meditation and self-discipline. Vinobaji also worked hard on land to observe his experiments with Kanchan-Mukti and virtually reduced himself to a farm labourer.

VI. A LIGHT FROM TELANGANA

During the same period, Vinobaji was invited to attend the third annual conference of Sarvodaya Samaj in April 1951. Vinobaji was not much inclined to attend it. But after the pressing requests made by Sri Shankarrao Deo he agreed and decided to go on foot from his Paunar Ashram to Shivarampalli—a place situated in the district of Hyderabad at a distance of about 300 miles from Wardha.*

In those days the Telangana region of the State of Hyderabad (now Andhra) was suffering from the malady of poverty amidst plenty. Perhaps in no part of the country, the condition of the villagers was so deplorable as in Telangana. They were under the stifling yoke of exploitation caused by the big landlords. A rift between the rich and the poor was existing in so devastating a proportion that nowhere else in Hyderabad such a plight was to be found. Naturally, this had attracted the attention of the Communists. They came to the poverty-stricken areas, met the people and heard the story of their sad plight. The Communists found a great disparity of income among the natives and resolved to remove it in their own "fashion". Consequently, they indulged in intimidating landlords and snatching away their property and land by force. The problem there, as in most villages, was the mal-distribution of land and wealth. The Communists took the opportunity. They created a sort of general awakening among the poor and dealt with the rich in their violent fashion. Thus Telangana became a hot-bed

of Communists activities.¹⁰ Again, the situation became worse due to police action taken by the government. Both the parties suffered a lot and many innocent people fell as victims of violence at the hands of the Communists. A reign of terror prevailed in the whole Telangana area and people lived a horrible life, rigorous and full of fear.

It was this place that Vinoba wanted to see. On 15th April, 1951, after the Conference was over, he started from Shivarampalli on a pedestrian tour of Telangana. As a soldier of Shanti Sena Vinoba was to propagate the message of peace. He surveyed the problems of Telangana. The most important factor at the root of all disturbances was the mal-distribution of land. Vinoba had seen that some people possessed thousands of acres of land while others were totally deprived of it—not even an acre to their credit. The villagers were not fully employed as land alone could not offer much employment. Cottage industries were practically absent. The whole peasantry was thus reduced to grinding poverty. It was due to all this that some communists had murdered landlords and divided up their lands among themselves. The government later on took the police action to round up the communists but the movement like hydra gained greater strength and spread over the whole of Telangana.

After touring the area for three days, Vinoba reached the village of Pochampalli on April 18, 1951. This village had about seven hundred houses and more than three thousand people. Vinobaji walked about this village talking to the local people. Vinoba's reputation as the saint of Panmar was widespread and so crowds gathered wherever he went. In the Harijan section of the village he noticed great distress and misery. Harijans or the untouchables wanted land and so they came to Vinoba and requested him that he might ask government to help them in this matter. To this Vinoba replied, "of what use is government help until we

10. The situation of Telangana of those days can be compared to a more recent (Aug. 67) occurrence—that of the Naxalbari area of W. Bengal.

can help overselves?"¹¹ And with this Vinoba started enquiring whether there were some landlords who might give land to the landless. A generous man named Ram Chandra Reddy was sitting near Vinoba. He stood and said confidently:

"Sir, I am ready to give"

"How much?" Vinoba asked quietly.

"As much as you need", replied Mr. Reddy.¹² And with this he declared that he would sign away 100 acres of his land. It came as a great surprise to Vinoba. He, therefore, asked him to repeat what he had said just then. And in the same firm voice he told Vinoba that he would give him land; that he would give him 100 acres. Ram Chandra Reddy thus signed the first land donation deed and handed it over to Vinoba.

That evening when Vinoba addressed the prayer meeting the atmosphere was surcharged with some sort of spiritual excitement. A light flashed into Vinoba's mind and he got a hint to solve the problems of the landless.

VIII. BIRTH OF THE MOVEMENT

The event of the first land donation made Vinobaji restless and that night he could not sleep. His mind was possessed by the vision of a great future. He started thinking about this miracle. He questioned himself whether it was a solitary or unrelated phenomenon or was there any power concealed therein like fire in the wood? Vinoba took this first donation as the will of God—an indication of the Supreme that dwells in every man and he was convinced that what had happened at Pochampalli might also be repeated elsewhere. The event strengthened Vinoba's faith in the goodness of man's nature. He was convinced that this donation did not take place only through individual thinking. There was a great social force behind it.

And then Vinoba began to think that Nature's planning was never partial. Like a "Physiocrat" Vinoba believed in

11. Vinoba's Speech. As Quoted in, H. Tennyson, *Saint on the March*, p. 58.

12. *Ibid.*

Natural Order and its beneficial character. Like a mother Nature has provided for the people not only food but an instinct of sharing it with other fellow-being. And suddenly he realised that a supreme power wanted him to fulfil some new mission.

At his next halt he named his programme as Bhoodan Yajna and confessed to his audience that he had previously no idea of Bhoodan whatsoever. But the first land donation strengthened his faith in non-violence and its power to solve the economic and social problems.

Thus was born the Bhoodan Movement. The road to non-violent economic revolution had been found.

Vinobaji's Telangana tour lasted fifty-one days. He covered about 200 villages, camped at fifty-one places, spoke to over 2,00,000 people and had received 12,201 acres of land for distribution among the landless.

After his Telangana tour Vinobaji returned to his Paunar Ashram. This term of the tour from Pochampalli to Paunar was the stage of the origin of Bhoodan—a palliative stage. At his Paramdham Ashram he had much to mediate upon, for he was now certain that if rightly directed and given the chance, the people would solve their own problems and accomplish their own salvation in the fullest sense of the term.

At Paunar Vinobaji made his pronouncement:

The work I have started is known as the Bhoodan Yajna. It is not simply Bhoodan; it is a mission in which all should co-operate...while God keeps strength in me I shall tour the country and beg for land for the landless. Land, like air and water, should be the common property of the people and should be equitably distributed.¹³

And Vinoba pledged on the eve of his departure from Paunar that he would not return to his Paunar Ashram until the problem of land distribution had been solved. On September 12, 1951, Vinoba left his Ashram and set out on foot for the fulfilment of his Bhoodan Mission.

13. Vinoba, *Bhoodan Ganga*, Vol. I, pp. 39-40.

IV



Progress and the Achievement of Bhoodan



After the Telangana-movement, Vinobaji resumed his work of Kanchan-Mukti at the Paunar Ashram which he had been carrying on for the last several years. Bhoodan at that time had come to be widely known and many opinions were put forward both for and against the movement. When the news reached Pt. Nehru, he grew eager to know about Bhoodan and Vinobaji's views on land reforms. He also wanted to have Vinobaji's views on the Draft Report of the First Five Year Plan then under preparation. Pt. Nehru sent R. K. Patil, a member of the Planning Commission, to Paunar to discuss with Vinoba the draft outline of India's First Plan. Vinoba could not appreciate the plan, particularly that part of it which dealt with Khadi and Village industries. To him it seemed to be a total negation of the Gandhian spirit. Vinoba was highly critical in his approach and remarked, "I do not find just a mere ordinary difference between my and the Planning Commission's approach; it would not be possible to mend it only by erasing a few lines here or there. If you accept my views then the whole Plan will have to be revised." Vinoba also made it quite clear that the plan was not consistent with the Directive Principles enshrined in the Indian Constitution particularly those regarding livelihood and work to all citizens. He said, "If you...can't provide work for all...you must resign....You ask village industries to support themselves. You first cut

1. Vinoba, Speeches. As cited by D.D. Moondara, *Sant Vinoba ki Uttar Bharat Yatra*, p. 3.

off my legs and then want me to stand?" And emphasizing the same point again he proclaimed, "I can clothe all the country in home-spun cloth within two years. If I don't, you can hang me on the scaffold. But it is a different matter altogether if you don't want home-spun at all."

Mr. Patil reported the result of his talks to Late Pt. Nehru, the Chairman of the Planning Commission. Vinoba's outburst had worried Nehru and the members of the Planning Commission. There had always been a conflict between India's industrial needs and the Gandhian aim of village self-sufficiency. Pt. Nehru in order to consult Vinoba invited him to Delhi. At a prayer meeting in September 1951, at Paunar, Vinobaji referred to the letter of the Late Prime Minister and said, "It is possible, my going to Delhi may not be very fruitful. But at least the Planning Commission would come to know about our views. We would not then be blamed for not explaining our point of view." On 7th September, 1951, Vinoba at the morning prayer told his colleagues of his decision about going to Delhi. It was a great resolve to go on foot to Delhi—nearly 800 miles from the Paunar Ashram. Vinoba set out on September 12, 1951, the day after his 56th birth day.

For a convenient study of Vinoba's pilgrimage for land a chronological account can be classified under the following heads:—

- I. Pochampalli to Paunar—The Palliative Stage.
- II. Paunar to Delhi—The Stage of Calling Attention.
- III. Delhi to Sevapuri—The Stage of Fortification of Faith.
- IV. Sevapuri to Bihar—The Stage of Concentrated Experiment.
- V. Bihar to South India—The Stage of Land Revolution.

2. Vinoba, quoted in R.P. Masani, *The Five Gifts*, p. 62.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Cited by Moondara, *Loc. Cit.*

- VI. Kanya Kumari to Kashmir—The Stage of Gram Swaraj and World Peace.
- VII. Kashmir to Punjab—The Stage of “Agyatvas”.
- VIII. Punjab to Indore—The Stage of Purification and Conquest of Violence.
- IX. Indore to Assam—The Completion of the First Round.
- X. Assam to Pakistan—A New Awakening.
- XI. In the Midst of Chinese and Pak. Aggressions—A Defence Measure.

I. POCHAMPALLI TO PAUNAR—THE PALLIATIVE STAGE

This has already been dealt in Chapter No. III entitled Birth of the Bhoodan Movement under head V “a light from Telangana.”

II. PAUNAR TO DELHI—THE STAGE OF CALLING ATTENTION

Vinobaji's march to Delhi added a new chapter to the history of the non-violent revolution in India. Vinoba had in his mind, since the very inception of the movement, an idea of the solution of India's land problem through Bhoodan. It was, therefore, not meant to be a march up to Delhi alone but a decision to cover the whole country on foot. In Paunar Vinoba got 60 acres of land. And when he left his “home country” two days later, he had collected 600 acres of land. Within a week (from 12th to 19th September) of his march Vinoba covered nearly one hundred and eleven miles and collected about 2,000 acres of land with an average of 285 acres per day. This average was greater than the Telangana where Vinoba collected on an average 200 acres per day. It clearly showed that the success of the Bhoodan in Telangana was not due to the terror of Communism but had an origin in the desire of the people to solve their problems peacefully and without fear or coercion. The power of love is stronger than the rule of law. Vinoba up to the next week,

i.e., 26th September, collected about 2,316 acres of land from 201 donors.

Vinobaji reached the University town of Saugar on October 2, 1951. Here, for the first time, he announced his demand for fifty million acres of land for distribution among the landless of the country. This target was to be achieved by 1957. Vinobaji remained in Madhya Pradesh for about twenty-five days and collected 6,400 acres from 563 donors. The details of the said donors are given in Table No. 1.

TABLE 1
Land Collected up to 7-10-51 in Madhya Pradesh

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Categories of gifts</i>	<i>Number of donors</i>
1.	Below 25 acres	541
2.	25—100 acres	9
3.	Above 100 acres	13
4.	Total Number of Donors	563
5.	Total Land Collected	6,400 acres

SOURCE : D.D. Moondara, *Sant Vinoba Ki Uttar Bharat Yatra*, p. 89.

In the morning of October 8, Vinobaji set his foot on the soil of Uttar Pradesh at Birdha. After three days, he entered Vindhya Pradesh (now Madhya Pradesh) and encamped at Tikamgarh. This land was formerly a princely state consisting of thirty-four units. Hardly any attempt was made before 1947 to ameliorate the conditions of the poor peasants in this area. Mostly covered with forest, the land is still unexplored and the terrain difficult. Vinoba had to walk across untrodden ways of deep woods to meet the people living in scattered villages. He toured the whole area for about five days and collected 800 acres of land from 204 donors. Vinoba once again went to Uttar Pradesh on October 16, and halted at Chirgaon. After several halts at Gwalior, Datia, Dambra and Dholpur he covered the districts of Agra, Mathura, Aligarh and Bulandshahr on his way to Delhi. By the time he reached Delhi on November 13, Vinoba had received 19,436 acres of land in Bhoodan with an average of more than 300 acres per day.

Vinobaji had covered from Pauniar to Delhi about 792 miles with an average of sixteen to eighteen miles per day. He spent eleven days in Delhi and met the President, the Prime Minister, members of the Planning Commission, Ambassadors, Press Reporters and several other social workers and leaders. The main objective of his visit to Delhi was to discuss the Plan. Vinoba had an open and frank talk with the members of the Planning Commission for three days. He expressed his point of view before the Planning Commission and convinced them of his programme for rural development and reconstruction. Rural planning, he advocated, should be given greater importance than the huge industries and long-term irrigation works. Vinoba's criticism was sharp and he demanded a change in the Plan priorities and allocations made under different heads. Vinoba was thinking in terms of self-sufficiency in basic needs and criticised the Planning Commission for neglecting the small schemes of irrigation, industries and rural employment.

The Planning Commission had agreed to some of the suggestions made by Vinoba but showed their inability in adopting his programmes in toto. Vinoba then remarked, "There is a difference between your approach and mine though you have the interest of the country at heart. My work is a purifying work and whether it influences others or not, I am personally becoming purer at heart through this work and nearing to self-realisation."⁵

III. DELHI TO SEVAPURI—THE STAGE OF FORTIFICATION OF FAITH

Vinoba left Delhi early in the morning of November 24, 1951 and marched towards Uttar Pradesh. He had in his mind a revolutionary programme and Uttar Pradesh, he thought, would provide him a comparatively better atmosphere to start with. It was here, later on, that an entire village in donation was given to Vinoba for the first time. Rich in cultural heritage, Uttar Pradesh had been the stage where almost the whole drama of Indian history had been

5. Quoted in, Misani, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

played. Here the Buddha preached and lived and Ashoka built up the only Empire ever maintained without arms.⁶ Vinoba got favourable response from the people of Uttar Pradesh. During his stay at Mathura the constructive workers had decided to give their whole-hearted support and co-operation to Vinoba's mission. They had fixed one crore acres of land as the final target and as the first instalment thereof, they decided to collect five lakh acres of land within one year in the State. Such a definite programme in terms of time and targets was never undertaken hitherto. The burden of this task was shouldered by Baba Raghavadas who joined this movement at the call of Vinoba. A member of the Legislative Assembly as he was, Raghavadas showed great enthusiasm in solving the problems of the landless of Uttar Pradesh through the Bhoodan mission. He left the membership of the assembly and decided to dedicate his life to the Bhoodan movement. It was in April 1957 that he left Uttar Pradesh at Vinoba's bidding for carrying on the Bhoodan work in Madhya Pradesh. During his two years' Padyatra of Uttar Pradesh Baba Raghavadas received 38,900 acres of land from 6,712 donors. He received Rs. 46,199 as Sadhandan from 1,364 donors. He covered nearly 4,997 miles in Padyatra and halted at about 590 villages of Uttar Pradesh. Vinoba has characteristically remarked that while the ambition was his, its fulfilment was Baba Raghavadasji's.

Leaving Delhi, Vinoba entered the district of Meerut and reached the Meerut City on 29th November, 1951. Sardhana was his last halt in this district. On one misty morning when Vinoba was on march he collided against a wayward cyclist and was seriously injured. But he did not stop and said, "I shall have no rest in my life. Whenever He (God) likes. He may suspend both my programme and myself." From mid-January to mid-April the workers of Uttar Pradesh collected 28,308 acres from 1,747 donors with an average (314 acres a day) much higher than that achiev-

6. H. Tennyson, *Saint on the March*, p. 71.

7. Quoted in, Masani, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

ed in Telangana. Vinobaji after covering almost all the districts of Western Uttar Pradesh reached Sitapur—a district in the central region of the State—on 22nd February, 1952. From Sitapur Vinoba reached Bahraich. From Bahraich he covered the districts of Gonda, Basti, Gorakhpur, Ghazipur and Ballia and then went to Banaras. Between Bahraich and Ballia he collected 17,476 acres—an average of over 400 acres daily.

The important events of this term were:

1. The Sarvodaya Conference at Sevapuri.
2. The coming of Sri Jayaprakash Narain.

The annual Conference of Sarvodaya Samaj was held between April 13 and 16, 1952 at Sevapuri—14 miles west of Varanasi. It was attended by many great leaders and constructive workers of the country. Late Sri Krishnadas Jaju presided over this Conference which was inaugurated by Acharya J.B. Kripalani. Vinoba expounded before the conference the ideology of Bhoodan and explained the revolutionary nature of the movement. He also dealt at length with the concepts of Yajna, Dan and Tap in their economic contexts. He called himself a soldier of the peace-brigade who was out to build a non-violent social order based on economic equality and justice. Bhoodan, he maintained, was the only programme through which such a radical change is possible. Before the people attending the conference, Vinoba placed a three-fold programme of Sootanjali, Elimination of money economy and Bhoodan that would ensure a better life to the villagers in India. Up to this period the total land collected by Vinobaji amounted to 1,02,361 acres from 4,936 donors.

Leaving Sevapuri in the early hours of April 20th, Vinoba passed through Bhadohi, Jaunpur and Faizabad and reached Lucknow on 9th May, 1952. It was the day of Buddha Jayanti. Vinoba compared his mission with the Wheel of Duty which had begun with Lord Buddha. Coming out of the same stock, the Bhoodan ideology stands for righteousness, sublimity and purification. It is a Praja-Sooya-Yajna—the people's participation in sacrificial services. It is a

duty and a social obligation which must be performed by every individual in the society. The mission of Bhoodan thus maintains the age-old spirit and tradition of the country.

After Lucknow Vinoba went to Kanpur—the biggest industrial city of the State. Here in Kanpur, he received 10,800 acres of land in Bhoodan, for the first time, the full target of a district. After offering thanks to the donors, Vinoba, like a successful auctioneer, raised his quota for Kanpur to 1,00,000 acres and said, "This land (10,800 acres) would be distributed among two thousand families of the landless—but what about the other resources? I wish that my friends would also offer 2,000 pairs of bullocks for these families. Kanpur is one of the richest cities of India and it would not find any difficulty in making such donations."⁸ After Kanpur Vinobaji moved on to Jalaun, Hamirpur and Banda. In Hamirpur district Vinobaji was given an entire village in donation. Diwan Shatrughan Singh—the biggest landowner of the area together with sixty-five other families who owned land—cheerfully signed away all their rights. At Mangroth village Vinoba raised the cry of "Sabai Bhoomi Gopal Ki". Then he went to Banda, the birth place of the poet Tulsidas. "I should get land in this district even without padyatra. The soil is sacred as Tulsi has offered Tap here. I expect a lot from this land."⁹ And about 21,000 acres of land was donated within seven days of his stay over there.

One of the most important events in the history of the Bhoodan movement was the coming over of Sri Jayaprakash Narayan, a great socialist leader who interviewed Vinoba on 30th May, 1952 at Banda Town. It was a meeting which turned J.P. the revolutionary into J.P. the reformer. Jayaprakash Narayan accepted Vinoba's ideology of the social change through non-violent action. His old experiences as a Marxist had led him to think that there is God in man and he must not be neglected. It was thus a great ideologi-

8. Cited by Moondara, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

9. Vinoba, *Speeches*. As cited by N. Deshpande, *Vinoba Ke Sath*, p. 132

cal success of Vinoba when he turned J.P. into a non-violent thinker and a pacifist.

After covering the districts of Fatehpur, Raebareilly, Sultanpur and Pratapgarh, Vinobaji entered Allahabad in the last week of June 1952. He was received by Late Sri Purshottam Das Tandon who made a short speech and said, "Vinoba is the voice of the landless...like Gandhi he has given a magnificent programme of social reconstruction."¹⁰ Vinobaji received the donation of 27,561 acres of land from that district.

After Allahabad Vinbaji went to Mirzapur and then re-entered Varanasi on 4th July, 1952. Thus Vinoba completed his padyatra of Uttar Pradesh. From September 1951 to July 1952 the Bhoodan Yajna made an impressive progress. The average land received in Telangana was 200 acres per day. While from Delhi to Sitapur (Uttar Pradesh) it was 314.

The average per donor previously was twelve acres. Now it came to sixteen acres. The table (p. 57) gives the break-up of targets for the next two years and the achievements of Bhoodan Yajna up to July 1952 unless otherwise stated.

The pilgrimage of Uttar Pradesh was almost over. September 13 was Vinobaji's last day in the State. He had toured every district except Almora. He had covered 3,750 miles and halted at 240 villages.

IV. SEVAPURI TO BIHAR—THE STAGE OF CONCENTRATED EXPERIMENT

Vinobaji's tour of Bihar is aptly termed as "a concentrated experiment". He made the State the field of his experiments in Bhoodan. Bihar being one of the most conservative and traditional of Indian States, it offers a challenge to the social reformers and thinkers. Vinoba deliberately took the challenge in order to prove the potentialities of non-violent action for bringing about a change in the social and econo-

10. Cited by Moondara, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

TABLE 2

The Target Fixed and Donations Received up to July 1952

<i>States</i>	<i>Target (in acres)</i>	<i>Donations (in acres)</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)
Assam	25,000	...
Andhra	1,00,000	...
Uttar Pradesh	5,00,000	3,04,370 (69.52)
Orissa	50,000	2,000
Gujarat	...	2,500
Tamil Nadu	1,00,000	...
Delhi	10,000	1,000
Punjab	1,00,000	...
Bihar	4,00,000	...
Bengal	1,00,000	...
Madhya Pradesh	1,00,000	7,363
Maharashtra	1,00,000	...
Madhya Bharat	1,00,000	2,000
Rajasthan	2,00,000	1,000
Vindhya Pradesh	40,000	1,000
Hyderabad	1,00,000	30,214 (25.10.52)
Extra (including Andhra, Tamil Nadu)		12,100
Total :	20,25,000	3,63,547

SOURCE : S.S.S. Records, Varanasi.

mic life of the people. Bihar has also been the land where the Buddha lived and practised Ahimsa about two and a half thousand years ago. This, Vinoba thought, should provide a better background for the success of the Bhoodan mission in Bihar.

On 14th September, 1952, Vinobaji entered Bihar after crossing the Karmannasa river. He lived in Bihar for more than two years and initiated other programmes ancillary to Bhoodan like Sampattidan, Shramdan and Jeewandan. Placing before the concept of Sampattidan he said, "As the work of Bhoodan progresses it becomes increasingly clear that the idea behind the movement cannot be fulfilled unless we go further and ask for a portion of wealth and property along with land gifts. And hence I have made up my mind that

I must now ask for a share of wealth and property from the people. I have placed my demand for the present at one-sixth share, but it is up to the people to decide what they can and would give me."¹¹

(1) Beginning of Sampattidan Yajna and J.P.'s attraction for the Movement

Bihar is the home-land of Sri Jayaprakash Narayan. He had joined Vinoba when he first met him at Banda. He was fully convinced that materialism as a social philosophy could not provide any basis for ethical conduct or goodness in life.¹² As a Marxist, he had made varied experiments but failed to see the true spirit of socialism. Sampattidan, Bhoodan and other Yajnas were the practical approaches true to the socialist tradition. Sri Jayaprakash Narayan found in this movement a concrete expression of love and sacrifice; an instrument of peace and prosperity. Of his own transformation to the cause of Bhoodan, he says, "I went to see Vinoba when he was in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh to discuss the question of land redistribution...I saw that he was serious about the problem and his economic outlook was revolutionary in a basic way. I decided to join Vinoba's movement. My brief experience was exhilarating beyond expectation. Within a week 7,000 acres of land were obtained from Gifts—most of them spontaneous and from small holders—announced at my meetings."¹³

In Bihar Vinoba was accompanied by Sri Jayaprakash Narayan and a long trail of selfless workers. The Bhoodan Ganga flowed in spate covering village after village and collecting land almost every day. From Patna Vinobaji went to Gaya on November 2, 1952, and declared his "Bhoodan quota" for the district as one lakh acres of land. The burden of the work fell upon the shoulders of Sri Damodaradas who together with Sri Gauri Shanker Saran Singh formed a Committee to work out the plan. On 8th December

11. Vinoba, quoted in S. Ram, *Progress of a Pilgrimage*, p. 3.

12. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy*, ed. B. Prasad, p. 152.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

Vinobaji was in Manbhumi, when he fell ill. He, therefore, was forced to stay at Chandil for some months and the fifth Sarvodaya Sammelan was held there on March 7, 8 and 9, 1953.

(2) The Chandil Conference

The Conference was held in open fields beside a river and was attended by nearly 3,000 delegates from all over India. Vinobaji placed before the people the four-fold programme of (i) integration of constructive work institutions, (ii) collection of 5 crore acres of land by the end of 1957, (iii) Sampattidan and (iv) Yarn offering. Up to the time of this conference Bihar had contributed about 2,00,000 acres of land in Bhoodan. On the eve of the Conference the Raja of Ramgarh offered 1,00,000 acres of land followed by a donation of 1,00,001 acres from the Raja of Dhanbad.

After the Conference and his own recovery from illness, Vinoba resumed his padyatra on 12th March, 1953. A few months later Vinobaji introduced a new programme of Shramdan Yajna in which everybody was to participate in the spirit of love and sacrifice. Vinoba himself used to offer his labour for the Yajna by digging for seventeen minutes every day. On 18th and 19th September, Vinobaji stayed at Vaidyanathdham. Thereafter, crossing the river Kosi and entering the Purnea district Vinoba halted at Kursela. The Maharaja of Darbhanga met Vinobaji that day and gave a donation of 1,18,000 acres. Covering Purnea, Saharsa, Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur Vinoba reached Patna on 10th January, 1954. Vinobaji fixed Bihar's quota at thirty-two lakh acres of land after consulting the workers and the Zamindars.

The next Sarvodaya Sammelan was to be held at Bodh Gaya in Bihar from April 18 to 20, 1954. It was here that Sri Jayaprakash Narayan offered himself for this great revolutionary movement and publicly declared his life-long dedication for it. He invited the youth of the nation to join the task of rural reconstruction and thus originated the Jee-wandan movement. There has been a great need of self-

less and devoted workers who are willing to dedicate their lives to the movement. Jeewandan offers an opportunity to individuals to work as a whole-timer in the interest of society without indulging in the "politics of power." A Jeewandani is a stead-fast devotee of truth and non-violence and serves the society in a selfless spirit.

After the Conference was over, Vinoba and his followers resumed the Padyatra. Vinobaji was in the district of Muzaffarpur when the whole area was seriously affected by heavy rains and floods. Vinoba placed a relief-programme before the flood affected people. He advised them to rebuild their fallen houses through local aid and voluntary service. He said that people should take to work and help each other.

Thus Vinobaji remained in Bihar for twenty-seven months and visited about five thousand villages and came into personal contact with more than half a crore of Bihar peasantry. The total land collected in Bihar from 14th September, 1952 to 31st December, 1954 amounted to 22,32,474 acres.

V. BIHAR TO SOUTH INDIA—THE STAGE OF LAND REVOLUTON

(1) Orissa

"This is the land that turned Ashoka the terrible into Ashoka the merciful""—with these words Vinobaji entered Orissa on 26th January, 1955. During Vinoba's walking tour of Orissa the Bhoodan movement culminated in Gramdan—the most thrilling aspect of the Bhoodan mission. The people of a thousand or so villages relinquished their age-old rights of ownership in land and banded together in pursuit of a new order of love and peace. Thus the movement received greater fillip and took a new turn. It was the district of Koraput where villages after villages were donated to him Till 28th May, 1955, when he entered Koraput the land gift amounted to 1,81,000 acres and the number of donors 59,300. Vinoba's Orissa campaign ended on 30th Sep-

tember, 1955 and he received 2,57,277 acres of land from 95,757 donors and 812 Gramdams.

(2) **Andhra and Tamil Nadu**

Vinobaji entered Andhra Pradesh on October 1, 1955. During the course of his padyatra there, he received 63,000 acres of land in donation till May 13th, 1956, when he reached Tamil Nadu.

The tour of Andhra reminded Vinoba of his first Bhoodan and the conditions of Telangana which were responsible for it. But now the Bhoodan movement has developed into a great revolution which has shown the potentialities of a non-violent method. Bhoodan has played a significant role in solving the land problem. The table No. 3 gives the details of land donations up to November 1955.

TABLE 3
Land Collected (in acres) up to 1955

Assam	1,950
Andhra	22,372
Uttar Pradesh	5,64,031
Orissa	2,72,738
Karnatak	3,492
Kerala	28,163
Gujarat	39,240
Tamil Nadu	44,696
Delhi	9,245
Punjab	14,638
Bengal	11,041
Bihar	23,69,152
Madhya Pradesh	1,73,544
Maharashtra	29,596
Mysore	8,789
Rajasthan	3,68,949
Vindhya Pradesh	7,753
Saurashtra	28,154
Himachal Pradesh	2,025
Hyderabad	1,12,300
Total :	41,11,928

SOURCE : *Bhoodan Yajna*, II-12 (23.12.55), p. 12.

On 13th May, 1956, as stated earlier, Vinoba reached Tamil Nadu. After two weeks, the eighth Sarvodaya Sammelan was held at Kanchipuram. On 7th June, after a purification fast, Vinobaji resumed his yatra. Crossing the district of Chinglepet on 29th June, he came to Pondicherry on 9th July, 1956. During the period of August to October Vinobaji remained at Coimbatore. Covering the most southern part of the country and the district of Madurai, Vinobaji reached Kanya Kumari—the southern-most tip of the Indian peninsula on 1st April, 1957 where he pledged:

I solemnly pledge this day, at the feet of Kanya Kumari, on the shore of the Indian Ocean and in presence of Surya Narayan that as long as Gram Swaraj is not established in India I shall continue my Yatra and ceaselessly carry on the efforts in that direction. May God give me strength for the achievement of this goal.¹⁵

VI. KANYA KUMARI TO KASHMIR—THE STAGE OF GRAM-SWARAJ AND WORLD-PEACE

From Kanya Kumari, passing through the district of Trivandrum, Quillon and Kottayam, Vinobaji entered the Trichur district and reached Kaladi on 7th May, 1957. At Kaladi in Kerala the ninth All India Sarvodaya Sammelan was held on May 9 and 10, 1957. It was presided over by Dada Dharamadhikari. Vinobaji in his Kerala tour received 1,571 acres of land and 301 villages in Gramdan. Leaving Kerala Vinobaji entered Mysore State. There was held, in Vinoba's presence at Yelwal, a historic meeting where the decision regarding Purna Swaraj was taken and which was attended by the Prime Minister Pandit Nehru who gave his whole-hearted support to the Gramdan movement. Vinoba thereafter went to the State of Bombay and passing through Kolhapur reached Pandaripuram where he attended the 10th Sarvodaya Sammelan which was held in the month of May 1958. He started his yatra again, halting at the places like Aurangabad, Dhulia, Surat, Baroda, Bhavanagar, Kandla,

Rajkot and Ahmedabad. After this Vinobaji reached Rajasthan and passing through Udaipur he came to Ajmer where the 11th Sarvodaya Sammelan was held in his presence. Vinoba was then planning his tour of Kashmir and so he covered the whole of Punjab in long strides, halting only at a few places. He passed through Rajpura, Chandigarh, Amritsar, Pathankot on his way to Kashmir.

Vinoba was accorded a rousing welcome by the people of Baramula, 34 miles from Srinagar, on his arrival in the town on 21st July, 1959. He addressed a largely attended prayer meeting at which thirteen persons gave him a land gift of 23 acres.

Vinobaji entered Srinagar on 2nd August, 1959. He said that Kashmir was like the head of India and that he hoped it would be the first Sarvodaya City. He declared that he had no political mission; nor was he associated with any party. He was for all and all were for him. He only wanted love and desired to convey the Sarvodaya message to every hearth and home.

Earlier on arrival in Srinagar, Acharya Vinoba was received by a large number of VIPs including Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, the then Chief Minister of the State. He said, recalling that Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed had offered him the whole State, "I hope this will be translated into reality."¹⁶ During the summer of 1959 Vinobaji remained in Kashmir and expounded the concepts of "Shanti Sena" and "Jai Jagat" or "World peace." He called upon the forces of non-violence and truth to bring about social harmony and cultural unity among the people.

VII. KASHMIR TO PUNJAB—THE STAGE OF AGYATVAS: VINOBA'S UNIQUE INTERPRETATION

Returning from Kashmir Vinoba went to Amritsar on 11th November, 1959. There he announced his decision to make an important change in the nature of his padyatra. During the last eight years of his continuous march from

16. *Sarvodaya*, IX-3 (Sept. 59), p. 123.

one village to another, Vinoba had practically covered the whole of the country from Saurashtra to Orissa and from Kanya Kumari to Kashmir. He had been in all the States of India except Assam. The practice so far had been that Vinoba's programme was fixed for months in advance resulting in a certain rigidity. The programme was fixed and any change was difficult without upsetting it. Even if it was felt that it would be to the advantage of the movement if he prolonged his stay in a particular area, it was not possible for Vinobaji to do so. Moreover, the programme being fixed for weeks and months ahead, more attention of the people and the workers was focussed on making befitting arrangements for reception, rather than on Bhoodan work itself. Vinobaji had been feeling for some time that both these factors acted as a handicap.

Vinobaji, therefore, decided that all this must change. His programme would not henceforth be fixed for more than a week in advance, leaving him enough scope to adopt his programme in a particular area according to the requirements of the situation. He explained his peculiar interpretation of 'Agyatvas' in the following words:

"The march will continue. But it is enough for the country to know that I am touring in a particular province. Those in the province will know that I am in a particular district. The district people will have full information of my programme of five or seven days in advance while my movements will not be secret, it may be said that comparatively I would be underground."¹⁷ Vinobaji felt that this change would give him an opportunity to discover, more fully, the power of non-violence and would also be a spiritual benefit.

VIII. PUNJAB TO INDORE—THE STAGE OF PURIFICATION AND CONQUEST OF VIOLENCE

After his tour of Punjab Vinobaji proceeded towards Indore through the Chambal Valley area of Madhya Pradesh.

17. *Bhoodan*, IV-29 (14-11-59), p. 1.

Covering the western districts of Uttar Pradesh from April 8 to May 12, 1960, he entered the dacoit-infested valley of Chambal on 13th May. The districts of Morena and Bhind of Madhya Pradesh have been notorious for robbery and dacoity for the last several decades. After receiving letters from Tehsildar Singh and his other associates and the persistent requests made by Major-General Yadunath Singh, Vinoba planned to tour the area to propagate the philosophy of non-violence and to create a favourable atmosphere for voluntary surrender of the dacoits. "If the individuals of their free will choose to obey the commands of a leader," said Vinoba, "non-violence will have come to stay. The test of non-violence is this voluntary surrender—Samarpan."¹⁸ Thus surrender does not mean suppression, it implies acceptance of a superior influence. Vinoba toured the Chambal Valley area for about a month. It was a great triumph of non-violence when in Kauhera village on May 19, eleven top dacoits of the Chambal Valley, carrying a collective prize of Rs. 20,000 on their heads, came out of their hide-outs in the small hours of the morning and surrendered to Acharya Vinoba Bhave. Addressing the prayer meeting in the evening, Vinobaji said that he had frank discussions with those "brothers" who had met him in the morning. He would now call them "rebels" (Bagees) or outlaws and not dacoits.¹⁹ At the close of his peace-mission in Chambal Valley the total number of dacoits who surrendered to Vinoba rose to twenty. All these "rebels" deposited their armaments and thereafter were taken under judicial custody. Addressing them while inside the jail Vinoba said, "Five years of my life were also spent in jail...but I treated it as my home, my Ashram and worked there with full devotion and zeal... You have also come here with a pure heart and I hope you would live peacefully so that others may think that you have mended your ways."²⁰

After this great conquest, Vinoba moved on to Indore.

18. *Bhoodan*, V-5 (21-5-60), p. 33.

19. *Bhoodan*, VI-6 (28-5-60), p. 41.

20. Vinoba's Speech inside the Jail. As cited by S.K. Bhatta, *Chambal Ke Beharon Men*, p. 203.

He reached the city on July 24, 1960 and stayed there for full one month. He asked the people to make Indore a Sarvodaya City. It was here that Vinoba started his campaign against indecent cinema posters which, according to him, were free and compulsory education in sensuality.²¹ He urged the people to create an atmosphere of purity so that life in cities may also become virtuous and spirited.

IX. INDORE TO ASSAM—COMPLETION OF THE FIRST ROUND

It was in one of his meetings with Vinoba that Late Pandit Nehru advised him to visit Assam—the border state of India—infested with many problems like communal riots, language differences, infiltration and tribal violence and unrest. Assam was the only state which Vinoba had not toured till then. He, therefore, went to this province situated in the north-eastern corner of the country and surrounded by international border with China, Burmah and Pakistan*—evidently the most strategically situated state of India. Vinoba moved on towards this state simply as a devotee of Samya Yoga and Ahimsa. In a letter to Smt. Ashadevi—a devoted Sarvodaya worker—Vinoba wrote:

I am coming to Assam but not as the compassionate. I am coming there as a devotee of Samya Yoga. Some events came to pass there. They have been dissolved in the past. I do not want to go into that. Nor do I intend to probe into the future. Mine is only the work in the present. I am sure I would not be attacking anybody. And the attack of love is always without attachment.²²

Thus Vinoba marched on towards Assam as a silent revolutionary. Crossing the north-eastern part of Madhya Pradesh and the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh, Vinoba entered Bihar on 25th December, 1960. From there with long

21. S. Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

*Now Bangla Desh.

22. Vinoba, *Letter*. As cited by S. Ram, *Vinoba Man and Message*, p. 55.

strides and passing through Bengal, Vinoba entered Assam on 5th March, 1961. Vinoba found Assam an "internally splitted" state with linguistic-cum-political rivalries. There was excitement and passion on the language question. The atmosphere was tense all around. When Vinobaji's programme was announced in Assam the people thought he would condemn their violent out-bursts. But Vinoba avoided any reference to the surface display of violence and appealed to them for the revival of the basic spirit of love and compassion that dwells in every human being. Addressing the people at Gauhati on 8th April, 1961 Vinobaji remarked, "I have come to Assam to speak less but listen more. I wish to see as much of this land as possible and to spread the message of love."²³ Vinobaji appealed to the people for Gramdan as only that could solve their problems. During his stay in Assam from 5th March to 4th September, 1962, Vinobaji received 500 Gramdans and 12,000 bighas of land in Bhoodan.

With the completion of Vinoba's tour of Assam the first phase of the Bhoodan mission was accomplished. Vinoba by that time had covered 40,000 miles in padayatra and attended 10,000 meetings. He collected more than forty-two lakh acres of land in Bhoodan. The Table No. 4 gives the state-wise break-up of the land collected and distributed up to March 1964.

X. ASSAM TO PAKISTAN—A NEW AWAKENING

It was one of the most remarkable developments of the Bhoodan movement when Vinoba undertook the padayatra of East Pakistan. With quiet but firm steps Vinobaji trekked to Bhuringamari, the first village-camp in his fourteen days' padayatra of Rangpur and Dinajpur districts. Addressing the people of this village Vinoba said, "I feel a joy too deep for expression on having your darshan....In you I have had a darshan of God. Though I have come here on foot through rains at this old age, I have not lost a whit of my joy and enthusiasm. Why?

TABLE 4
Land Collected and Distributed

<i>States</i>	<i>Land Received (in acres)</i>	<i>Land Distributed (in acres)</i>
Assam	11,935	295
Andhra	2,41,952	1,02,033
Bengal	12,887	3,825
Bihar	21,32,772	2,77,660
Delhi	300	180
Gujarat	1,03,530	50,984
Himachal Pradesh	5,240	2,531
Jammu & Kashmir	5	5
Kerala	20,293	5,774
Maharashtra	1,50,394	1,02,212
Madhya Pradesh	4,04,662	1,39,988
Mysore	20,086	3,123
Orissa	1,57,460	51,102
Punjab	14,739	3,601
Rajasthan	4,30,437	97,774
Tamil Nadu	80,433	21,519
Uttar Pradesh	4,34,351	2,07,590
Total	42,27,476	10,70,166

SOURCE : *Sarvodaya*, April 1965.

Because I get an opportunity of placing the suffering and misery of the poor before the rich and the happy.... I ask those who own land to donate it to the poor."²⁴ This appealed to the people who were attending the meeting and one of them announced his donation of one acre of land out of the four acres in his possession. Thus on the very day of his entry into Pakistan Vinobaji received land gift. It brought the promise of a new awakening to the villagers of Pakistan and testified that other countries could also practise non-violence in solving their social and economic problems.

The second halt of Vinobaji was at Raiganj. Thereafter he went to Nageshwari the third village of his stay and got one Bigha of land. The next halt was at Bhitarnand where about 7 bighas of land were donated to him. Kurigram was the next village where Vinoba received more than 60 bighas

of land. Passing through Panga, Vinobaji reached Tista on 11th September, 1962. It was his 68th birthday and many people came to felicitate him on the occasion. Special prayers were offered to mark this day. After covering Mirbagh, Rangpur, Pagelpur and Taraganj, Vinoba went to Syedpur on 16th September, 1962. From here he marched towards Viral—his last halt in Pakistan. From 5th to 20th September, 1962 Vinoba toured Pakistan and collected 176 bighas of land which was distributed on the same spot as was received, among forty-eight landless labourers.

Thus it happened—perhaps the only example of its kind in history—that a saint belonging to one country succeeded so promptly and so well in the other on a mission of collection and distribution of land—land for which, throughout the long march of history, nations have been torn of internal revolutions and bloody strife and kingdoms have contended against empires.

XI IN THE MIDST OF CHINESE AND PAK. AGGRESSIONS—A DEFENCE MEASURE

Vinobaji's movement is a process of revolutionary advance. From a humble beginning of 100 acres it has reached the stage of Gramdan. Vinobaji has shifted the emphasis from Bhoodan to the new stage of Gramdan. Bhoodan alone will undoubtedly solve many problems of the landless but Gramdan would bring about a total transformation of the rural society, standing as it does, for unity and strength; for economic stability and justice; for security and service. Gramdan thus is the current phase of Bhoodan. A village in donation means a self-administered unit that provides for a better life and living to the villagers. Vinoba likes to call it a "second line of defence."

It was on October 20, 1962 that China attacked India. This was not a mere border skirmish, it was an undeclared full-fledged war on many fronts. Now, wars are not fought, only on battle fronts: a well-equipped army is not the only necessity. What is equally imperative is the gearing up of the economic machinery to the war effort and a strong force

of the people inside a country who help to bring about social unity and ideological oneness. People can defend the borders well if they do not stage defections internally. Vinoba, therefore, suggested the formation of a permanent "defence line." To attain this end the people have to liquidate all their differences and come out to live as one community. Vinobaji's Gramdan movement is a defence measure against all possible internal conflicts. It envisages to check internal disruptions and helps in the creation of a sense of community life. In the face of Chinese threat or Pak. abhorrence, Gramdan would bring about unity among the people. In times of danger—be it external aggression or internal conflicts—they must display their loving heart and a firm faith in collective living that go with Gramdan and Bhoodan—the Vinobian measures of defence and development.

Bhoodan thus culminated in Gramdan and has come to stay as a social philosophy. The pyramid of Bhoodan and its stages of development may be presented in the following manner:

The concept of Bhoodan originated in 1951. As the movement progressed, new phases of Sarvodaya came to light—Sampattidan in 1952, Shramdan in 1953, Jeevandana in 1954. The Gramdan concept was added to the movement in 1955 which opened up the new vistas of Gram Swaraj in 1956. The concept of Shanti Sena in 1957, spread and sprawled over to one of world peace with its slogan of Jai Jagat in 1958. Eventually the concept broadened into one of all embracing world Sarvodaya in 1959, adding to it in 1960 the necessary accompanying idea of the non-violent conquest of violence. The unifying function of the movement had its recognition in 1961 when it came to be known as a "great solvent" of internal differences. The "defence measure" aspect of it came to light during the Chinese and Pak. aggressions in 1962 and 1965. The movement is running in its "Typhoon Stage" as Vinobaji calls it now. It means the collection of ten thousand Gramdans in six months and the campaign has been started in Bihar.

Bhoodan, up to 31st March, 1967, has collected 42,64,096 acres of land. It is a great achievement of the movement from the point of view of the millions of the landless of the country. The Planning Commission estimated to collect only twelve lakh acres of land for the landless after the enforcement of the land ceiling Acts in all the states of the country. Compared with this, the Bhoodan movement has achieved a great success in collecting nearly four times of what government would collect by legislation. In addition, the Gramdan movement provides new opportunities for re-building the village economy based on the principles of equality and justice where there would neither be a landless nor a landlord. A detailed study of Gramdan has been made in the Chapter entitled "From Bhoodan to Gramdan." For the present, the author would analyse the role of Bhoodan in the agrarian economy of India which forms the subject matter of the next chapter.

V



Role of Bhoodan in the Agrarian Economy of India



The response evinced by the Bhoodan Movement is a clear indication that it is not a mere charity programme started by Vinobaji but has got a greater purpose and a deeper meaning behind it. The basic aim of Bhoodan is to rejuvenate the rural economy. In India where most of the people live in villages and in poverty and ignorance, a new awakening for the social and economic development of the people is an urgent need. The Bhoodan movement offers ample opportunity for organising village-people and making them conscious of their economic rights and social responsibilities. As land is the basic source of production in the villages, its mal-distribution has created many problems. The growing pressure of the population on one hand and increasing poverty, hunger and landlessness on the other, have tended to cripple the village economy. The Bhoodan movement which aims at land distribution in the first instance, and its social control and organization as the final step, has an important role in the agrarian economy of India. Thus it is that the nature and scope of the Bhoodan economy has to be studied in the context of Indian rural life and its agrarian structure.

I. NATURE OF THE AGRARIAN ECONOMY

Agriculture is the mainstay of Indian economy. About 70 per cent of the people in the country are dependent on land for their living. Agriculture and the ancillary activi-

tics account for more than half of the national income of India. According to the estimates for 1964-65, out of a net national income of Rs. 20,010 crores at the then current prices, Rs. 10,270 crores or about 51.3 per cent was contributed by agriculture alone.¹ In spite of the growing pressure of population on land and relatively low yields, Indian agriculture continues to occupy a prominent position in the national economy. The census of 1961 reveals the predominantly rural character of the population as nearly 82 per cent of the people live in villages and agriculture remains the largest single occupation that sustains about 69.5 per cent of the working population of the country.

(1) **Agriculture as the Way of Life**

An important character of the agrarian economy of India is the almost complete harmony between the vocational aspect of agriculture and the pattern of living. The business and family life in agriculture are so intimately connected that it is difficult to distinguish between the farming and the family life. Agriculture is not simply an economic activity: it has become a way of life. It has got important bearings on the social, cultural and even religious life of the people. The community life, its codes and custom are all agrarian in character. The people literally cling to the soil and all their aspirations and hopes, their joys and sorrows are linked with the land—the land that shapes their destiny, that brings to them unrestricted blessings and sometimes unprecedented calamities. Village-life and agriculture thus are inseparably inter-linked and any scheme to bring about improvements in the agrarian structure would not be effective unless attitudes and values of life are radically transformed. The rural economy of India is an integrated whole of social, cultural and ethical orders with a geo-physical complex that necessitates the life of a traditional form and fulfils the obligations of the community-life and system.

(2) **The Striking Phenomenon of Poverty**

Though new agricultural practices and techniques have

1. G.O.I., *India 1966*, p. 148.

made some head-way in recent years, India's agrarian economy is still tradition-bound and typically stagnant. The age-old pattern of production, transport and marketing to a large extent prevails even now. The growing population on one hand and the decreasing production on the other, have created new problems for the country. The present economy suffers mainly from a shortage of food production and the paradox of "plenty amidst poverty" is the prevailing phenomenon. "The most arresting fact about India is that her soil is rich and her people are poor." The poverty of the people is an oft-acknowledged fact.

The estimate of per capita national income at the 1964-65 prices is Rs. 421.5. As compared to the advanced countries of the world our per capita income is only 1/31st of that of U.S.A, 1/22nd of that of Canada and 1/12th of that of U.K.¹ About 19 per cent of the people are living below the poverty line, i.e., spending Rs. 50 or less per month. If one adds to it 36.7 per cent those spending between Rs. 51 to Rs. 100, the estimate would come to above 56 per cent of the people who either live under extreme poverty and misery or maintain a subsistence level only.⁴

(3) The Stagnant Agricultural Sector

Although independence brought some spectacular changes in the country's economy, her old economic condition remained almost unaltered with regard to the agricultural productivity and the increasing shortage of foodgrains. The regular shortage in food production and the import of cereals have become a menacing problem. Just after the First Plan the prices of foodgrains took an upward turn and by the end of the year 1959, the food problem had become acute and assumed grave proportions. The price index of cereals in 1959 came to 107 (1952-53=100) which was 76 in the year 1955-56. The period of Third Five Year Plan also witnessed

2. M.L. Darling, "*The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*," quoted in footnote, Vera Anstey, *The Eco. Development of India*, p. 1.

3. G.C. Jangir, *Indian Economy*, p. 11.

4. R. Dutt and Sundharam, *Indian Economy*, p. 55.

an abrupt rise in the prices of foodgrains. During the past three years from January 1963 to January 1966, the price index of cereals rose from 103 to 153 (1952-53=100). The worst of it was the year 1967 when Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and parts of Madhya Pradesh were officially declared famine areas.

(4) **The Livelihood Pattern**

The livelihood pattern or the occupational structure is another factor which affects society very considerably and determines the nature and behaviour of the economy. The ratio of Primary, Secondary and the Tertiary occupations indicates levels of economic development. Agriculture, Manufacturing and Transport industries are thus grouped into three major occupational divisions which govern the nation's economy. The ideal combination of these occupations depend upon the size, nature and potentialities of those factors. The Indian economy is occupationally agricultural. Even the Secondary (Manufacturing) activities are based on agricultural production. This agrarian structure of the country is responsible for the tardy growth of Indian economy. The poor productive capital, the increasing population and inadequate purchasing power are the elements which characterise India as a poor country which needs greater attention for her economic growth and development.

Indian economy, therefore, needs an overall change—a total transformation of her rural sector. The problem is thus of "lifting agriculture from its low equilibrium and breaking the mesh of inter-locking factors such as out-dated technique, primary poverty and low productivity which tend to pull it downward." But for efficient working and effective results the first and immediate need is to save the man behind the plough.⁵ To achieve the desired aim, there must be an improvement in the economic condition of the cultivator and the agricultural labour that form the backbone of the rural economy of India.

5. G.O.I., *Agri. Labour in India*, Report on the Second Enquiry, Vol. 1, preface i.

6. *Ibid.*

II. THE PLIGHT OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR

A country where majority of the population lives on land, the man who tills and works on it naturally contributes much to the nation's economy as a whole. A sizeable part of the total working force of India is engaged in agriculture. On the basis of census, the total number of agricultural workers (cultivators and agricultural labourers) engaged in crop production came to 131 million of whom 99.5 million were cultivators and 31.5 million agricultural labourers.⁷ There has been an increase of 43 per cent and 14 per cent in the categories of cultivators and agricultural labourers respectively in 1961 over 1951. Thus agricultural workers formed about 70 per cent of the total working force for India in 1961. In various states this percentage varies from 38.3 in Kerala to 79.3 in Madhya Pradesh.

It will be noticed that cultivators are little more than half of the total working force of India. The figures given in Table No. 5 reveal state-wise percentage of agricultural worker to the total working force in 1961 and 1951:

TABLE 5
Agricultural Workers as Per Cent of Total Working Force
in 1961 and 1951

States	Cultivators		Agri. Labour	
	1961	1951	1961	1951
Andhra	40.12	35.13	28.59	33.38
Assam	64.69	61.35	3.65	3.29
Bihar	53.87	60.09	22.97	23.88
Maharashtra-Gujarat	48.34	39.27	21.01	27.28
Kerala	20.92	23.15	17.38	25.49
Madhya Pradesh	62.68	45.45	16.63	33.64
Mysore	54.13	48.70	16.42	20.29
Orissa	56.82	51.88	17.01	18.45
Punjab	56.28	55.04	7.66	11.46
Rajasthan	73.61	65.72	4.11	7.58
Uttar Pradesh	63.88	67.98	11.30	7.64
West Bengal	38.50	35.49	15.30	15.31
All India	52.82	50.02	16.71	19.72

SOURCE: *Census of India*, Paper No. 1 of 1962, p. 436.

7. *Census of India*, 1961, Paper No. 1 of 1962, p. 433.

The Table No. 5 indicates that taking the country as a whole, out of every 6 workers one is an agricultural labour. There are, however, wide variations as between states. In Assam and Rajasthan out of every 100 workers, there are four agricultural labourers as against twenty-nine in Andhra Pradesh, twenty-three in Bihar, twenty-one in Maharashtra-Gujarat, eighteen in Madras, seventeen each in Kerala, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh and sixteen in Mysore. In West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, there are fifteen and eleven agricultural labourers for every 100 workers respectively.

(1) **The Cultivator—Size and Concept**

The term cultivator is a broad concept which includes all types of workers (other than wage earners) engaged in agriculture. Loosely defined, it means the man who earns his major income from land but does not earn wages by offering labour on the land of others. A cultivator may own or may not own land or he may cultivate the land himself or get the land cultivated by others. The only important fact about the cultivator is that he must exercise his "decision". Thus the man who takes the responsible decisions which constitute the direction of the process of cultivation is referred to as the cultivator⁸ (even though he does not perform any manual labour whatever). These cultivators had been classified into two groups according to the scheme of 1951 Census. They were:

- (i) cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned and their dependents;
- (ii) cultivators of land wholly or mainly un-owned and their dependents.

The category of cultivators, according to 1961 census, "covers both owner and tenant cultivators. Cultivation includes ploughing, sowing and harvesting but does not include fruit growing or keeping orchards or groves or working for plantation.... Besides actual cultivation involving manual work, persons engaged in active supervision or direction of"

cultivation are included in this category.”⁹ Here the dependency concept of 1951 census has been dropped.¹⁰ Thus two sub-groups of cultivators have been recognised, viz., cultivating owners and non-owners.

Another class of agriculturists, though numerically “insignificant”,¹¹ is that of rentiers. The census of 1951 had named them as non-cultivating owners of land and estimated their number as 5.3 million, i.e., 2.1 per cent of the total agricultural population. The census of 1961 dropped this category mainly due to the reason that the laws concerning Zamindari abolition had been passed by nearly all the states and such a class of rentiers did not seem to exist. But contrary to this, however, one finds a powerful section still existing in rural areas which undoubtedly governs and dominates the policies and programmes of land management and either blocks or scrapes land reforms. In the name of “self-cultivation” a section of the land holders has come out as a powerful bloc which may be called “rentiers in disguise.” The census of 1961 thus recognised only two categories of agriculturists, viz., the cultivators and the agricultural labourers. Curiously, the non-cultivating proprietors have been grouped together in the category of cultivators.

(2) **Agricultural Labour—Definition and Classification**

The other important category is that of the agricultural labourers. They are the persons whose business merely is to perform physical labour in the manner required by the cultivators. They do not take the risk and responsibility of cultivation. According to the census of 1961, “An agricultural labour is one who works on another person’s land without exercising any supervision or direction in cultivation for wages in money, kind or share of produce. He has no right or lease or contract on land on which he works.”¹² The agricultural labour is thus a person who works on land in the

9. *Census of India*, Vol. I, Part II-B(i), p. 3.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

11. Thorner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

12. *Census of India*, Vol. I, Part II-B, p. 3.

capacity of a labour on hire or on exchange, and is paid in cash or kind or both. The following are the main agricultural occupations performed by him according to the Second Agricultural Labour Enquiry Report:—

- (i) Farming including tillage of land;
- (ii) Dairy Farming;
- (iii) Production, Cultivation and Harvesting of any commodity;
- (iv) Raising of live-stock, bees or poultry; and
- (v) Any practice performed on a farm as incidental to or in conjunction with the farm operations.¹³

(a) **Attached and Casual.** The agricultural labourers have been classified into two groups: (i) Attached and (ii) Casual. An attached labour is one who works under continuous employment contract with the landlord, seasonally or annually, with or without “debt-bondage” or with or without “tie-in-allotment” of land. There are different methods of the recruitment and retention of the attached labourers. Their terms, and conditions of employment show a considerable diversity from region to region according to the local traditions and custom. Some employers make advances against wages to labourers on condition that they would continue to work for a certain period. In some States attached workers are allotted a small plot of land and they work for their employers on reduced wages, though sometimes with extra benefits.

A casual labour is one who works without continuous employment on daily wages for specific agricultural operations which last only for a short duration. They are paid at the marketing rates and remain free to seek alternative employment if they so choose. They are employed from time to time according to the exigencies of work.

(b) **Free or Unfree.** The above classification of agricultural labour in the context of Indian Agriculture carries a connotation of the workers being “free” and “unfree” or

13. G.O.I., *Agri. Labour in India*, Report on Second Enquiry, Vol. II, pp. 407-8.

“bound”. The worker is mostly tied down by loans which he can scarcely hope to repay. He has to render customary services such as house-hold work and other non-agricultural services desired by his employer. He has to work longer hours than other employees and look after the crop, cattle and fields of his master.

The condition of the agricultural labourers particularly those who are landless is quite depressing. They suffer mostly from the social and economic disabilities and are prone to exploitation.¹⁴ The lack among them of effective organisation and the character of their seasonal employment, low wages, traditional and hereditary occupations have left no scope for them to rise above the subsistence level.¹⁵ Under-employment, and un-employment are chronic maladies of the agricultural sector. There are operations, which involve more physical strain but provide only “under-time” employment, while others like harvesting and threshing engage workers considerably for longer hours than the normal working day—resulting in “over-time” employment.

The work-period of an attached labourer is usually longer than that of the casual labourer. The quantum of such an employment differs from place to place, depending upon many factors like crop-pattern, land utilization, the size of holding, the method of remuneration and the land-holder's capacity and convenience to pay and offer employment. The wage employment to casual labourer is 201.23 days in a year and to attached labour is 271.05. A detailed account of their annual average wage employment is given in the Table No. 6.

From the Table No. 6, it is clear that there has been no marked change in the total number of working days from the First Enquiry over that of the Second Enquiry period. Moreover, the unemployment period has increased with regard to the casual labour (adult male worker) from 90 days in 1950-51 to 128 days in 1956-57. An attached labourer

14. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

15. *Ibid.*

TABLE 6
Extent of Annual Employment of Men Agricultural Labour
(All India)

<i>Categories of Agri. Labour Families</i>	<i>Total Number of Days Employed</i>	<i>Total Number of Days Employed</i>
	<i>1950-51</i>	<i>1956-57</i>
Casual labour	207	201.23
With land	190	180.43
Without land	225	218.79
Attached labour	312	271.05
With land	296	247.39
Without land	320	292.19
All Agri. Labourers	218	221.70

SOURCE: *Agri. Labour in India, Report on the Second Enquiry*, Vol. I, p. 68.

also finds it difficult to be gainfully employed for 68 days in a year according to the Second Enquiry Report.¹⁶ The other important fact to note is that a larger portion of these agricultural labour households are landless. It is estimated that 57 per cent of the total agricultural households are without land.¹⁷ And those who have land, generally earn the major part of their income from agricultural wages as their small strips of land can hardly provide a desired minimum necessary for sustenance.

(3) The Wage Structure and the Size of Income

The major part of the income of agricultural labour is derived from wages. They have generally no other occupations of their own. The paucity of resources and lack of enterprise are the main reasons which come in the way of their self-employment or alternative occupations. It is estimated that about 81 per cent of the total income of agricultural labour families is realised from wage employment in agriculture and few other ancillary activities. The study of wage rates and the mode of their payment reveals the

16. G.O.I, *Agri. Labour in India*, Second Enquiry, Vol. I, p. 97.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

deteriorating condition of the agricultural labour in India. As compared to industrial wages which are completely monetised, agricultural wages are of mixed type. The wages are paid either in cash or kind, or partly in cash and partly in kind. The evil of irregularity of payment is also widespread. It is not uncommon to see that workers are exploited and are forced to work over-time as the length of working day is not rigidly followed.¹⁸ But the most alarming and depressing feature of the agricultural wages is that the average daily wage rate has gone down. As indicated earlier,¹⁹ the average daily wage of a casual adult male has declined from 109 paise in 1950-51 to ninety-six paise in 1956-57. If we study the wage rates of individual States the worst sufferers are Assam and Bihar where the reduction is to the extent of thirty-six and thirty-five paise respectively. Next comes Uttar Pradesh, with the reduction of twenty-six paise, followed by Rajasthan and West Bengal, showing a fall of twenty-five and twenty-three paise respectively.

III. THE GROWING IMPOVERISHMENT OF VILLAGES

As the village labour force is unorganised and uncared for, along with other factors, agrarian economy tends to show signs of economic depression and stagnation. Barring a few, the bulk of the rural population is composed of small land owners-cum-tenants, landless tenants, and agricultural labourers. One may almost say that villages have provided their inhabitants with nothing except growing impoverishment and misery. The lack of proper organisation of the people in villages and reluctance to improve their economic lot have made it very difficult for the village economy to get out of the encircling gloom and depression.

One cause behind the depressing state of the village economy is the decline of cottage industries. Once, the cottage industries occupied a prominent place in the rural economy of India. Agriculture in India by its nature offers only six

18. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

19. Vide Chap. III, Sub-head—"Economy at Cross-roads".

to nine months intermittent employment to people. The cottage industries supplemented their income and engaged the workers for the period they were free from agricultural work. Moreover, these industries were well-suited to the agrarian structure of the country where the concept of the owner-worker type of industry was in vogue and self-employment and the dignity of labour were the recognised virtues. These industries had made the rural economy stable and self-reliant, and created an industrial system free from exploitation and economic ills.

But the supremacy enjoyed by the cottage industries in earlier period registered a gradual decline in the beginning of the 19th century. Our rural and house-hold industries suffered a great set-back due to the advent of British rule in India. The whole village structure started falling off. The cause behind this distressing trend was the unhealthy policy of the British Government which favoured imports from England and thus created a heavy competition for the home-made goods. The disappearance of the indigenous courts and the changing tastes and temperament of the people were some of the other causes responsible for the decline of these industries.

But since independence there has been a lot of improvement in their condition and a number of measures were adopted to give fillip to their development. It would not be out of place to examine the contribution which these industries make to the national economy. "It is estimated that about two crore persons are engaged in cottage industries. The handloom industry alone employs fifty lakh people or nearly as many as are employed in all other organised industries, including large scale industries, mines and plantations."²⁰ As regards the contribution to the national output, the cottage industries play no less a role than do the large scale organised industries. The output ratio between them is 1:1 and the employment ratio is 4:1. The real importance of these industries, however, lies in the fact that they are the

integral part of the rural economy and their neglect would bring impoverishment and socio-economic decadence.

The present position is such that one may not feel very happy about the policies and programmes of rural development adopted by the government. The heavy technological structure at the top without sound support from the bottom makes the whole structure weak. And as the growing population finds no adequate sustenance from land and as the cottage industries till recently were not able to provide them with sufficient opportunities for earning their livelihood, the villages are being increasingly impoverished. The pressure of population on land goes on increasing, thus adding to the already large landless working force. Under the present circumstances, therefore, the system of industrial production and development should be so devised as to provide employment to the maximum possible extent.

The growing unemployment, the falling production and increasing pressure of the population on land have all combined to arrest the growth of the village economy. The extent of people's indebtedness, which in one way reveals their economic backwardness, is quite alarming. It is said for the cultivator that he has, "no reserves and until the harvest comes, he must find the money...he contracts debts; from his harvest he meets his piled up obligations; what remains hardly suffices for a few months and...He lives in perpetual poverty."²¹

If this is the condition of the cultivator, one can well imagine the plight of the landless labourer who is, obviously, more susceptible to economic ills than the cultivating owners or tenants. It was "estimated that about 64 per cent of agricultural labour households were indebted in 1956-57 as against 45 per cent in 1950-51."²² The debt per indebted household was Rs. 138 per annum in 1956-57 as against Rs. 105 in 1950-

21. A.I.R.C.S., *General Report*, Vol. II (1954), p. 152.

22. G.O.I., *Agri. Labour in India*, Report on Second Enquiry, Vol. I, p. 225.

51.²³ The total volume of debt of the indebted agricultural labour households was estimated at about Rs. 143 crores in 1956-57 as against Rs. 80 crores in 1950-51. Thus the total indebtedness had considerably increased during the Second Enquiry period.²⁴

The above findings thus reveal the growing rural indebtedness, economic backwardness and rural poverty. One has a feeling that the causes behind these maladies are much deeper than what appear from outside. There are social, economic and psychological factors, responsible for this sad plight. The rural economy needs total transformation. Rural industries must be saved and the people must also re-orient their policies governing land and its management.

IV. WHITHER LAND REFORMS?

Land as the basic source of production has been a subject of careful study. Beginning from the individual associations to the highest authorities at the government level, all have practically suggested their own methods and ways of its utilization and management. To a socialist, land is the property of the state and all activities concerning land-use and production are controlled by the state. To a capitalist, land is a marketable commodity and whosoever owns it has full authority over its use and organization. But to one having faith in human values, land is as free a gift of nature as air, water and Sun. To him land is a free source of production and must be shared equally by all. To a Sarvodaya-philosopher and a critic of private property, like Vinoba, the ownership of land is the main cause of economic disparities among the agriculturists. "Hands off please", says Vinoba "Land is neither yours nor mine; it is God's who made it."²⁵ And he adds, "Discard your pretensions of ownership. God created everything. How can you claim ownership on the strength of a lot of papers you have?"²⁶

23. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

24. *Ibid.*

25. S.S.S., *Land Revolution in Orissa*, p. 5.

26. *Ibid.*

With such diverse views regarding the land ownership and management, one has yet to find out a satisfactory basis for formulating the laws and policies of land reforms. A system that seeks to establish good relations between the owner and the tenant, a policy that governs land and its use and a frame-work of laws that controls the agrarian structure, its management and organization, are all generally included under the policies of land reforms. The ideal of such policies is to bring about peace and prosperity among the agriculturists whose interest they primarily serve.

In India the main purpose of land reforms has been to remove the vestiges of an outdated system that had prevailed since long and had tended to cripple the agrarian economy. The objective thus was to "allow the land service of the country to function closer to the interests of the cultivator."²⁷ "It was to bring the actual cultivator into direct relationship with the state."²⁸ The land policy adopted in the First Plan was to encourage the tiller of the soil by sanctioning him the right of ownership of the land which he cultivated and thus allowing him to reap the benefit of the labour he put on it. To achieve the objective, many reformative measures were adopted, viz., those concerning Tenancy Reforms, Size of Holdings and Rural Re-organisation.

(1) Tenancy Reforms

The measures regarding tenancy reforms relate to regulation of rent, security of tenure and confirmation of ownership on tenants. The systems under which land is now held in India have undergone a great change. Formerly mainly two systems, namely, "Intermediary Estates" and "Raiyatwari Holdings" were prevalent. The intermediaries, who for long enjoyed the proprietary rights and reduced the customary and permanent tenants to the position of rack-rented tenants-at-will, were abolished first. In the raiyatwari areas the lands were settled originally with the actual cultivators. Under the economic pressures, however, the major portion

27. G.O.I., *Agri. Legislation in India*, Vol. VI, p. i.

28. Thorner, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

of land came to the hands of "rent-receivers" who were to get them cultivated by tenants. In this way a new class of intermediaries came into existence even in the raiyatwari areas.

It was towards the close of 19th Century and in the first quarter of the 20th, that some emphasis on land reforms was laid but only the post-independent era could see the removal of intermediaries on the basis of an announced national programme.

The intermediaries were not always cultivating their home-farm lands. Even the tenants holding land under intermediaries were not in all cases cultivating their land and were in turn creating "sub-tenancies". As the tenants did not enjoy protection under the right of permanent and heritable possession, legislative activity in this sphere was recently directed to protecting their rights.

It is not difficult to find out the extent and measure to which legislation has affected the peasantry and improved their condition. Nobody can deny that intermediaries are still very much present in India. Gaps are left in the tenancy laws which render them largely ineffective. The security of tenure, for instance, was subjected to the landlord's right to resume some area of land for personal cultivation. In the absence of proper definition of "personal cultivation", the landlords, even absentees living in distant towns, were able to resume land from tenants and get them cultivated by hired labour, crop-sharers or "disguised tenants". In the State of Uttar Pradesh, for example, where it is said that the tenancy reforms got the best deal,²⁹ the Act of Zamindari Abolition did not require the cultivator to till; he was not even supposed to participate in the actual work of cultivation.³⁰ Thus it is that quite a sizeable area of land is even now held by tenants and sub-tenants under various types of arrangements in the country. Though the area leased in has now been reduced in comparison to the National Sam-

29. G.O.I., *Report of the Panel of Land Reforms* (1958), p. 23.

30. Thorner, *Loc. Cit.*

ple Survey (eighth round) where 24 per cent of the area operated by rural house-holds was estimated on lease.³¹ The sixteenth round of the N.S.S. has reported that 22 per cent of the total operational holdings were of the mixed type, 73 per cent were entirely owned and the remainder, i.e., 5 per cent were entirely leased in holdings. The Table No. 7 gives the picture of the operational holdings owned and leased in:—

TABLE 7
Percentage of Operational Holdings Reporting Land Owned and Land Leased In and their Percentage Shares of Areas Owned and Areas Leased in 1959-60

Number of Sample Villages : 3,755		Number of Sample households 44,377	
Item		Estimates	Percentage
(1)		(2)	(3)
1.	Operational holdings (000)		
	(i) Total Number	49,184	...
	(ii) Number reporting area owned	46,464	94.47
	(iii) Number reporting area leased in	13,430	27.36
2.	Area Operated (000 acres)		
	(i) Total area	3,26,161	100.00
	(ii) Area owned	2,85,308	87.47
	(iii) Area leased in	40,853	12.53

SOURCE : *The N.S.S. Report*, No. 113, p. 12.

It is interesting to note that the sum of the operational holdings reporting land owned and land leased in exceeds the total number of operational holdings by 10,710 (000). This excess constitutes 22 per cent and is of mixed type, i.e., holdings owned as well as leased in. This 22 per cent should be taken into consideration while calculating the percentage of the area leased in. If one adds net leased in area of 5 per cent to this area of 22 per cent which for every practical purpose falls under leased in category, the total amounts to 27 per cent. In actual practice, therefore, an area no less than 27 per cent of the total operational holdings in India is still leased in.

31. *The N.S.S. Report* (eighth round), No. 10, p. 30.

(2) Size of Holdings

In spite of the abolition of intermediaries, the big landed magnets still dominate the rural economy. The outlook and traditions for which the landlords were noted still occupy a dominant position in the socio-economic life of the villages. "Feudalism still lives not only in the minds of the agriculturists, both rich and poor, but also in the facts of our agrarian structure. Disparities are still very wide and make our political democracy in the villages devoid of economic and social content."³²

In respect of land holdings, it can be easily said that there has been no perceptible change in their size and a very considerable area is still held under the small size holdings. The distribution of holdings were of less than an acre size covering about 30 per cent of the total area operated.³³ The Table No. 8 shows the cumulative percentage distribution of the number of operational holdings and the area operated by size limits of operational holdings:

TABLE 8
Cumulative Percentage Distribution of Number of Operational Holdings and Area Operated by Size Limits of Operational Holdings (All India)

<i>Size of holdings</i>	<i>Operational holdings</i>	<i>Area operated</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)
Up to 0.49	10.15	0.39
Below 1.00	19.42	1.32
2.50	40.70	6.71
5.00	62.96	18.88
7.50	74.81	29.76
10.00	81.81	38.83
12.50	86.57	46.80
15.00	89.43	52.68
20.00	93.09	62.10
25.00	95.29	69.30
30.00	96.61	74.83
50.00	98.93	87.82
All Sizes	100.00	100.00

SOURCE : *The N.S.S. Report*, No. 113, p. 21.

32. Gyan Chand, *Socialist Transformation of Indian Economy*, p. 133.

33. *The N.S.S. Report*, 16th round, No. 113, p. 13.

The Table No. 8 indicates that the distribution of operated area over the holding sizes is extremely uneven in the sense that though there are numerous small-sized holdings having very little share of area to their credit, a few large holdings have the control over the major share of operated area.

This uneven distribution of holdings reveals that about 25 per cent of big landholders occupy more than 70 per cent of the operated area. The majority of the rural households is composed of small land-holders and 28 per cent of the rural households are reported to be landless.³⁴ This has naturally created great disparity among the agriculturists.

In order to remove this disparity, legislation putting ceiling on future as well as on existing holdings, has been enacted by almost all the states. The objectives of such a ceiling, as indicated by the Panel of Land Reforms, are to reduce glaring inequalities in land ownership and income and to enlarge the sphere of self employment.³⁵ The usefulness of such legislation, however, is doubtful as it has many loopholes which are exploited to render the laws ineffective. "The major loophole in the statutory provision of ceiling is of course the high ceiling which releases very little land for distribution."³⁶ A striking feature of the ceiling Acts is that they generally envisage ceilings on individual holdings instead of family holdings (as the size of the family has been given special consideration and due allowances are made). Moreover, little could be expected of these Acts, particularly when the big land-holders were given ample warning of the possible advent of ceilings. They had taken all steps to divide their property among their friends and relatives and except "paper partition" nothing very solid came out of the imposition of ceilings.³⁷

Though some changes have been brought about by legis-

34. *The N.S.S. Report*, No. 113, p. 11.

35. G.O.I., *Report of the Panel of Land Reforms* (1958), p. 99.

36. Bhowani Sen, *Evolution of Agrarian Relations in India*, p. 258.

37. Thorner. *op. cit.*, p. 8.

lation in the rural economy, land reforms could succeed only to a limited extent. Their objectives first "to remove such impediments upon agricultural production as arise from the character of the agrarian structure"³⁸ and secondly "to create conditions for evolving as speedily as may be possible, an agrarian economy with high levels of efficiency and productivity",³⁹ have been largely defeated. They have failed on both the fronts. A new trend towards the growth of capitalism in agriculture is discernible. As indicated earlier, the growing number of agricultural workers, the increasing number of the landless rural households and the prevailing practice of "hired labour", all are characteristics of an agrarian structure more of a capitalistic form than that conforming to a "socialistic pattern".

An important feature of such an economy is the preponderance of tiny plots of land. "There are 49.2 million operational holdings, possessing an area of 326.2 million acres of land in rural India, the average size being 6.63 acres. Each operational holding on an average is constituted by 5.82 fragments and the average size of each fragment is only 1.14 acres."⁴⁰ In addition, there is no strict regulation of security of tenure. "The law provides that all leases must be registered and in case of non-registered leases, land will vest in the person actually occupying it. But 'still a back door has been opened through non-recognition of share-cropping and sub-letting'..."⁴¹

The growth of agricultural proletariat on one hand, and the emergence of capitalist-cultivators on the other, have undoubtedly led to the disintegration of agrarian structure. At the top one finds a class of well-to-do farmers, i.e., a new type of "rural bourgeoisie" owning large areas of land and at the lowest rung are those agricultural workers who are mostly landless. In between these two extremes are other

38. G.O.I., *Progress of Land Reforms*, p. 232.

39. *Ibid.*

40. *The N.S.S. Report*, No. 113, p. 11.

41. Sen, *op. cit.*, 196.

groups of agriculturists who may be named as "small landholders" or middle class peasants and "the poor peasants." The new land laws thus have not been able to bring about any structural change in the rural economy. The old outlook and traditions are still followed and poverty, hunger and landlessness continue to be the order of the agrarian set-up.

V. NEED FOR RURAL AWAKENING

What India needs at present is a rural awakening—a revolution in the minds of the people which might transform the whole set-up and establish new values of the life and new economic relationships. There is great power lying dormant with the people. If it is utilised it can bring about a great social revolution. Vinoba calls this power "Jan-Shakti." If this power remains idle, nothing good can be achieved and no legislation, under the circumstances, can provide better life and economic security to the people.

Vinoba's quest, therefore, is to establish Lok-Shakti (Civil-Power) by creating a sense of responsibility and dignity in the minds of the people so that they might come forward as an organised force and win over the forces of economic disruption and social disintegration. But it can be done only by the people themselves. It is the power of the people, not legislation, that can bring about a new change in the social outlook and economic behaviour. The force behind the Bhoodan movement, as Vinoba says, is purely of the people. It is based on "Jan-Shakti" as opposed to Dand-Shakti or Himsa-Shakti—the rule of the state or militant power. It is purely a non-violent power that can establish an economy of peace and permanence. To re-vitalize rural life and teach the people about their duties and importance of a disciplined life, Acharya Vinoba has launched a movement which is purely of the people, for the people and by the people. He has established personal contacts with millions of the people living in the country, teaching them the message of love and sacrifice so that they might come out with a bold step to re-juvenate the rural life.

Indian village life, so far, has created a conservative outlook. The rural folk have for long clung to the age-old traditions and out-dated customs. But under the present politically free atmosphere they must be awakened to the new responsibilities awaiting them and they must be made to develop a new outlook and a different psychology. After all, it is the power of thought followed by action that alone is capable of bringing about change in society. A philosophy of action which caters both to the "inner self" and the "outer" may bring about the establishment of those higher values in society which may lead to its suitable transformation for the benefit of all. The movement of Vinoba is an attempt in this direction. It aims to generate a people's force by re-awakening the rural masses from their torpor of fatalism and indifference and making them conscious of the new values that should guide their individual and social behaviour—new values based on thoughts in response to Godhead in man.

VI. BHOODAN AS A SOLUTION

Bhoodan appealed to Vinoba as the solution for many social problems and economic ills. Bhoodan to him does not mean merely transferring the right of ownership from one hand to another or distributing land from the rich to the poor but stands for an all-embracing revolution—an over-all transformation of human values. Bhoodan denotes much more than what it literally means. It is the new interpretation of Sarvodaya philosophy propounded by Mahatma Gandhi.

As stated earlier, the condition of Indian economy has been such that no legislation could have been effective in setting it in order and that it requires a mass movement for its re-juvenation. The landlord-tenant relationship had deteriorated considerably as they were based on the latter's sufferings and sacrifice. The pattern of land distribution was also uneven and unjust and people were being reduced to the state of the landless labourers. The mounting dissatisfaction and growing socio-economic disparities had led some people to revolt against injustice and social ills. It first

manifested itself in the shape of the "Communist-revolt" in Telangana.

The Bhoodan movement came as a great solvent. There were widespread signs of upsurge in the form of "blood revolts" before this movement was actually launched. Vinoba tried to dilute the forces of violence by means of love and affection. As an ardent believer in non-violence, Vinoba showed the path of love, truth and sacrifice and developed his own theory of a non-violent revolution in the socio-economic sphere. He had a different approach to the problems and had evolved his own technique of solving them.

He first started with land. His humble appeal to all land owners for donating one-sixth part of land to the landless was an act of sacrifice for the lowliest and the lost. This was the technique of Dan. He desired Yajna to be performed by those who had small lands and wanted them to donate whatever land they could as a token of love. He then asked his followers to do Tap in order to create an atmosphere of piety and sacrifice. Thus Vinoba's tripple philosophy of Yajna, Dan and Tap sought to provide a non-violent solution to the land problem,

Vinobaji lays much emphasis on the goodness of mankind and says that there is a light in the heart of every human being and that people have to make use of it by providing a better atmosphere of love and fellow-feeling. This can only be done through non-violence. For economic matters Vinoba forwards his philosophy of equitable and just distribution of wealth and other resources. But his Bhoodan movement is not confined to land alone. He has gained long strides in advancing the philosophy of Shramdan and Sampattidan which means offering of labour, wealth and other resources for the good of the society. Concentrating on the problem of village economy and land distribution, Vinoba has pleaded that all land belongs to God and that it should be shared equally by everybody. He views the problems of the village in quite a different form and provides his unorthodox solutions.

The villages of India, in general, provide a "four tier" classification of the people from the economic point of view. At the top are the big landlords possessing more than 100 acres of land and cultivating through hired labour and disguised tenants. They partly live in the villages and partly in the nearby towns or cities.

Next comes the group of the self-cultivators with twenty or more acres of land who maintain ordinarily an easy life with or without hired labour and living as the whole-time residents of the villages.

The third tier is of those small peasants who maintain only a tiny plot of land and do their own cultivation without hired labour and lead a very hard life. Sometimes they supplement their income by other ancillary occupations.

At the bottom of the ladder are the landless who work as the cultivating labourers and are classified as attached and casual workers. They remain very poor and can scarcely manage two meals a day. They can hardly stand the calamities like drought and epidemics and are the first victims in any such event.

Vinoba has named these groups as Dhani* (Big landholders), Sukhia* (Rich peasants), Dukhia* (Small cultivators) and Bhukhia* (The famished class of the landless). The Second Agricultural Labour Enquiry Report has also classified these agriculturists as (A) Big land owners, (B) Land owners-cum-Tenants, (C) Landless Tenants and (D) the Agricultural labourers.⁴² Grouping B and C together, the ratio of the above classes roughly comes as follows:—

$$\begin{array}{l} A : | B : C | : D \\ 2 : \quad 783 \quad : 19.7 \end{array}$$

The National Sample Survey of 16th round of the year 1960-61 had estimated the percentage of the landless (Class D) as 28. It indicated that the number of the landless had increased by 8.3 per cent.

Considering the case of the rural economy in general,

* धनी, सुखिया, दुखिया, भुखिया ।

and the problem of the landless in particular, Vinoba has offered his solution in the shape of Bhoodan. He fixed the target of five crore acres of land to be obtained as Bhoodan for distribution among the landless of the country. He started his movement initially as a relief measure for the landless but his ultimate aim was to abolish the very idea of ownership of land. Starting, therefore, with Bhoodan, Vinoba later on switched over to the Gramdan movement which not only settles the land problem but also provides an opportunity transforming the whole rural society.

The Bhoodan movement, therefore, maintains that there should not be any landless in the village and the Gramdan movement has an ideal that there should not be any land owner in the village. Bhoodan is the starting point whereas Gramdan is its consummation. Vinoba's Bhoodan movement should not be taken as an isolated act of transferring land from one hand to another but should be regarded as a great socio-economic movement which ultimately aims at bringing about new changes in the order of the society. He has evolved a technique of mass contact and successfully displayed the efficacy of soul-force as against the coercive and violent force in establishing Gram Swaraj. His method is non-violent and peaceful: His approach is dynamic and all-comprehensive.

When Vinoba asks for Bhoodan he never forgets to remind the people that:

- (i) The ownership of land, in principle, has to be declared as God's, i.e., society's.
- (ii) No power should dominate society except the discipline of good thought.
- (iii) Every act of the individual must be dedicated to the good of the society.

And he appeals to every category of donors. From the big landlords, he demands land as a matter of right. From the land-holders of "intermediate level" he asks for one-sixth of land as the share for the landless and to the small peasants his appeal is to donate whatever they can as a token



Sri Javahirakash Narayan became one of the greatest exponent of the Sarvodaya Ideology Here he is explaining his own transformation from the path of Socialism to Sarvodaya



The author attending Vinoba's prayer meeting



*In presence of Sarvodaya workers and all prominent national leaders Late Dr. Rajendra Prasad commended the Bhoodan Movement as a solution towards the national problems.
(Sarvodaya Sammelan—Puri)*



Vinobaji talking with the leaders of the Indian National Congress, Shri U.N. Dhebar and Shri Shriman Narayan.

of love. Vinobaji's technique of asking land from every group of the land-holders is based on the principle of economic justice and social affection. The rich should shed off their richness and the poor their poverty by joining the Bhoodan Yajna and creating an atmosphere of purity, love and sacrifice.

And when Vinoba asks for Gramdan, he says to the people that mere land donations are not enough. They must discard the right of ownership and live like a family. Bhoodan is the starting point while Gramdan and Gram Swaraj is the ultimate end. Vinobaji thus offers a great solution to the problems of rural economy in the shape of the Bhoodan and the Gramdan movements.

VI



From Bhoodan to Gramdan



It should be clear by now that Vinoba's mission is a process of revolutionary advance. It has shown a very remarkable progress by directly taking the shape of Gramdan. It is a noble evolution. It implies the pooling and sharing of the entire land of a village by all its inhabitants equally and impartially. This revolutionary advance from Bhoodan to Gramdan introduces an important change in Vinobaji's mission. It has enabled Vinoba to envisage the spread of his land revolution to the four corners of India. Making it the mission of his life, Vinobaji once declared: "My trek is Gramdan. I took a vow last year that I would continue this trek to the end of my life to achieve Gram Swaraj." Gramdan, in Vinoba's opinion, opens the door to a new era of social evolution wherein human beings will perceive and realise the higher values and richer relationships of community sharing. It seeks to establish social order of equality and liberty, of love and sympathy where the rich and the poor will live like friends and comrades.

I. VINOBA'S PHILOSOPHY OF VILLAGISM

Vinobaji offers a unique philosophy of villagism. He now behoves villagers not to think in terms of land owners and landless peasants. They should now think in terms of the community, every member of which has valuable contribution to make to its progress and welfare. By offering the entire land in Gramdan the landlord presents a wider field

of freedom to the landless and in doing so widens his own since he rescues himself from bondage of isolation. In one sense no one owns the land of such a village but in another sense every man owns the entire village, grasps it in his imagination, sees himself as a responsible part of it and the village as a veritable part of his own personality. Every member of a Gramdan village tries to objectify his personality in everything he does and realises that his finest contribution to his village is himself, his labour, knowledge and the skill to whatever degree he possesses.

Vinobaji holds the view that all the persons are sons of the soil. They are nourished by the same land. Can't they live like a family? Vinobaji traces back the history of ancient village organisations and offers the same pattern to the new Gramdan villages. Atharv-Veda has pronounced the same view while praising the Motherland.² It signifies that all persons are sons of the same soil which provides them with all her produce (like Kamdhenu) and treats them equally as one family. People had self-government in villages those days and there was no ownership of land. Everybody had to work and people were grouped according to professions. There was definite understanding that a part of the produce would be given to the government for its welfare activities and for the protection granted to the villages.

Gradually, the whole set-up underwent a change and people asserted their right of ownership. Now the ownership concept reigns supreme. People have preserved their right to own, sell or mortgage land. The caste and class distinctions have cropped up. Land has become a marketable commodity. All such things have hampered the progress of the country. Vinobaji, therefore, calls for discarding the ownership concept. Thus in Gramdan the right to own land is voluntarily surrendered to the village community. Land ceases to be a transferable commodity. The village community as a whole acquires the right of ownership over the .

land. The peasants remain free to use land individually or collectively. They decide their cultivation pattern and village organisation. Gramdan offers them the opportunity to solve their problems mutually and amicably.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF GRAMDAN

Gramdan has assumed greater significance as a programme for rural reconstruction and development. It not only provides opportunity to eradicate the class distinctions of haves and have-nots but creates a sense of service and sacrifice among the people. It makes the donors feel that their act of discarding ownership has been a step towards establishing peace and social justice. It improves the moral atmosphere of the village and strengthens the society by way of mutual help and fellow-feeling. In Gramdan the old concept of Yajna, Dan and Tap is revived and social service becomes an article of faith for every individual in the village. Thus comes into being a society which is given to non-acquisition, non-possession, co-operation and welfare, labour and self-reliance and which eventually helps towards establishing a social order of peace, permanence and prosperity.

Explaining the significance of Gramdan, Vinobaji points out the five-fold programme of this revolution. This envisages:

- (1) Creating an atmosphere of economic equality and liberty.
- (2) Reviving the cultural life of the society by making the village a family.
- (3) Discarding the land ownership concept, thus creating ethical atmosphere to settle disputes mutually without litigation, bad blood or bitterness.
- (4) Establishing old Varnashram Dharm which is derivative of peace, fearlessness, compassion and faith.³

3. The four Varnas—namely, Brahmin, Chhatriya, Vaish and Sudras—
(Continued on next page)

- (5) Protecting the society from outward aggression thus acting as a defence measure.

Gramdan, in this way, promises to be a great revolutionary movement which seeks to create a new consciousness among the people and establish a new social order. It provides a method of land distribution by weeding out private ownership of land and giving the land to every one in the village at a ratio of the requirements of each family based on the number of its members. That every man in the village should receive a plot of land to work upon, is the fundamental idea of Gramdan. This is sought to be achieved by doing away with the unequal distribution of land and by avoiding uneconomic holdings and unduly large holdings of land. The method of land distribution may differ from village to village and each village can adopt its own course. All the land of a village can be pooled into one common plot and distributed to each family for cultivation according to their need and strength to work. Every individual will cease to be the owner of land and the right of ownership will vest in the village community as a whole. The concept of Gramdan is a comprehensive one as it envisages to solve so many problems at one and the same time, e.g., (i) The problem of abolition of intermediaries no longer remains in a gramdan village; (ii) The problem of landless labourers is automatically solved; (iii) The problem of land ceiling does not arise at all in a village after gramdan; (iv) The problem of co-operative or collective farming to which Gramdan movement is a practical approach, is solved to a considerable extent; (v) It does away with uneconomic holdings and reduces the undue pressure of population on small plots of land; and (vi) It incidentally does away with the sub-division and fragmentation of holdings.

(Continued from previous page)

have been interpreted by Vinobaji as attributes which indicate शान्ति निश्चयता, दया और श्रद्धा । The professional groups have become stale and flat but these attributes must be revived in the society. Likewise, Ashrams of Sanyas, Vanprastha, Grahastha and Brahmacharya also indicate the above characteristics,

III. THE WIDE CONNOTATION OF GRAMDAN

The idea of Gramdan, simple at its face value, connotes wider implications. Vinobaji regards it as a great solvent. It dilutes the forces of poverty and ignorance, disease and squalor and makes the accomplishment of big task of reconstruction of rural society easier. Vinobaji has evolved his own methodology of Gramdan. He says, "there should not be any landless in the village is my first step and last is to see that there remains no land owner."⁴ Bhoodan provides land to the landless while Gramdan totally discards the idea of ownership. Bhoodan and Gramdan are interwoven. The former has the basis of compassion and the latter of co-operation and equality. The lasting sense of fairness and justice comes through compassion. Hence Vinobaji calls for Gramdan which regenerates society with its rich tradition of equity and social justice. But still Gramdan has something more to perform. According to Vinobaji Gramdan is not complete even if all the holders of land have pooled their holdings. He says that the landless labourers must also feel that they have pooled their resources with the landlords in the form of human labour, i.e., agrarian technique and skill of cultivation. To put it in other words, one can say that Vinoba wants the community ownership of all goods and services for the benefit of the society as a whole.

Vinobaji says that people have divided the society into Haves and Have-nots. "But once", says Vinoba, "I thought it is wrong. All are haves in this world. Nobody is a have-not. God has given some persons land; others may have labour. If somebody has incisive intelligence, the other may have love and compassion. The problem is that all are attached to their possessions, material or immaterial. The wider implication of Gramdan is to surrender to the society whatever one has got for the benefit of his ownself."⁵ It is like a promise of rendering unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God that are God's.⁶

4. Vinoba, *Gramdan*, p. 1.

5. Vinoba, *Sulabh Gramdan*, p. 1.

6. S. Ram, *Vinoba and His Mission*, p. 221.

Gramdan, therefore, implies that along with the land the farmers should pool their labour and skill, tools and implements, their other resources of cultivation like animal power and if need be, their capital contribution in the form of cash to carry on the productive activity on a collective scale. The farmers should also surrender their holdings of wells and tanks to irrigate the farms and make the same a common property of the village. Thus all the said belongings of an individual will be converted into the community goods and will belong to the village in common.

In a Gramdan village an individual will not be entitled to sell or mortgage the land or lease it out to others or to dispose it off otherwise and in the same way he will not be entitled to do so in case of any other goods and similar possessions. Yet there is a completely free choice at the instance of an individual to remain separate both before and after distribution. No coercion would be exercised in securing any land from any holder for Gramdan purpose.

The basic idea of Gramdan movement is the abolition of private ownership of land. It goes a long way to create the spirit of brotherhood and considerate feelings among the village and eradicates the differences between the haves and the have-nots and loosens the tension between the high and the low. Vinoba says that all the problems concerning village life have a common base and should be solved collectively. Thus Gramdan does not basically deviate from the original movement, but it is instead a manifest form of sprawling over the bounds the movement initially set up for itself.

IV. AGRICULTURAL PATTERN AFTER GRAMDAN

What would be the agricultural pattern after Gramdan? Vinobaji leaves this question to the people to decide and answer. However, it would seem that the general view is that all land would belong to the village in common and after distributing it according to the Gramdan method, one-twentieth portion thereof should be kept for landless labourers. But there is no fixed pattern of farming to be

adopted by Gramdan villages. It may be individual, co-operative or collective. The people are left free to choose any type of farming. But one who has to depend upon land for his livelihood must get land—is the fundamental idea behind Gramdan.

If the agriculturists so desire, they may pool the whole land and cultivate it on co-operative basis. Vinobaji is in favour of such co-operative farming, although he would not like to impose the pooling of the whole village land against the will of the people. If the Gram Sabha likes to divide the whole village land in, say, three or four contiguous plots for carrying out co-operative farming, it can do so. The idea is that the size of the co-operative farm should not be so big that the various families working on the farm are unable to maintain intimate social contacts. Co-operative farming should, of course, be voluntary and not in the nature of an imposition. But the villagers should be explained the benefits of co-operative farming and experiments on a few model farms would go a long way in convincing them about the advantages of co-operative farming.

And if it is not possible to pool the land of the whole village in one co-operative farm, plots of land will be allotted to different families only for purposes of cultivation and not as individual property.⁷ The land can remain with the families only so long as it is properly cultivated according to the plan of the village community. The families are expected to use the co-operative methods to the maximum extent possible in the various processes of farming including agricultural marketing. This kind of mutual aid could also be regarded as a form of co-operative farming. At any rate in a Gramdan village, the land will belong to the village community as the right of ownership is vested in Gram Sabha.

Vinobaji is of the opinion that the productivity of land does not necessarily depend upon the size of the farm.⁸ In

7. This idea has undergone a change in "Sulabh Gramdan".

8. D.D. Moondara, *Sant Vinoba Ki Uttar Bharat Yatra*, p. 207.

a country like India intensive methods of farming would be necessary. Of course, the plots should not be too small and the land should not be wasted by erecting boundaries between different fields. Village could follow the Japanese method of dividing different farms by showing a crop-strip of a different colour between two plots.

In short the following methods are adopted for cultivation:

- (1) Individual farming where every family has a separate plot.
- (2) Co-operative farming where two or more families join together. It is like the joint-farming system adopted by the government.
- (3) Collective farming where whole village or a group of villages join together for cultivation.⁹

It is also possible that in a big village all the above-mentioned types of farming might be in vogue. Whatever be the pattern of cultivation, one thing is common in Gramdan that all work in a team spirit and a co-operative labour force is generated to tackle the problems of agriculture and rural reconstruction. This provides the basis of a socialised land economy¹⁰ in the village.

V. VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

(1) The Formation of Gram Sabha

The gramdan villages are organised to function on the lines of direct democracy. So far people have seen the democratic tradition of representation and a system of counting majority votes in favour of taking decisions. But in Gramdan villages a direct method of democracy is being adopted through the formation of Gram Sabha. All the village activities are conducted through Gram Sabha which consists of all men and women of the village above the age of twenty. The Gram Sabha would meet from time to time to discuss all matters concerning village organization and

9. S.S.S., *Gramdan—Prachar Aur Prapti*, p. 42.

10. B.R. Misra, *V for Vinoba*, p. 60.

development. It is the supreme body of the village and its decisions are final which are taken unanimously or at least by three-fourths majority. The main criterion is that most of the people should agree to it and give full co-operation to the Sabha. The constitutions of the Gram Sabhas may have slight variations from village to village. The President and Secretary of Gram Sabha are elected unanimously. Below the Gram Sabha is the working committee consisting of ten to fifteen members to observe the day-to-day functions in the village. If the people so desire, they can authorise the president of Gram Sabha to constitute the working committee according to his own plan. One Gram Sabha to one village is the rule. But a village must consist of hundred or more persons to make it a workable unit. Such Gram Sabha enjoys greater confidence of the people than the older form of Gram Sabha organised under the Panchayati Raj. In the Gram Sabha of Gramdan villages, unlike Panchayati Raj, people take personal interest and turn up in majority at the meetings to ponder over the questions like village industries, agricultural production, irrigation and planning, etc. The main cause behind this popularity is that all the land of the village is registered in the name of Gram Sabha and not on individual basis. The land revenue is collectively paid to the government. Thus in gramdan village, responsibility is shared by all. People offer their services directly for the progress of the village and develop their own personality. They approach the village problems with the outlook of a family and settle them peacefully and unanimously.

(2) The Creation of a Village Fund

There is provision for the creation of a village fund (Gram Kosh) in every gramdan village. The land-holders have to offer one-fortieth of their produce and the salaried people or wage-earners contribute one-thirtieth of their income annually. This village fund may be set up in the form of cash or grain or both. It provides a recurring income for the village which, according to Gramdan rules, is spent on village welfare activities and on the disabled, widows and sick people of the village.

The Gramdan villages also establish labour co-operatives

(Shramdan Samiti) to utilize the labour potentialities of the villages. People voluntarily offer labour, work on the fields, educate children and develop the spirit of co-operation for the betterment of society as a whole. The Gramdan village also has a shop of its own from where people purchase the things of their daily use. The trade and commerce of the village remains under the control of Gram Sabha. It estimates the needs of the people and tries to get things produced in the village itself. Thus Gram Sabha aims to reconstruct the economy of the village from the internal resources and make it self-sufficient in respect of food and agro-industrial products.

VI. GROWTH OF GRAMDAN MOVEMENT IN INDIA

It was on 24th May, 1952, for the first time when the first Gramdan took place in Uttar Pradesh. It was the village named Mangroth in Hamirpur district, where all the holders of land donated their entire land in Bhoodan (as at that time the idea of Gramdan had not evolved) and it was henceforward that Vinoba thought of complete gramdan and started asking all the land-holders in a village to give up their holdings for the reconstruction of a new society in the villages. The idea thus was not based on any theoretical propositions but had come out from the natural and spontaneous activities of the people themselves for whom it was ultimately meant. What Vinobaji did was the induction of the law. Thus Gramdan became an economic principle, based on Vinoba's reasoning and analysis of solving the rural problems and reconstructing its economy.

Since the movement was given a new trend, the emphasis shifted from Bhoodan to Gramdan. An overall approach to the land problem came to be evolved in place of their earlier piece-meal approach. The Gramdan movement, initiated as above, attracted the attention of eminent economists of the country, who found the germs of solution for such problems which so many "plans" were unable to solve.

From Uttar Pradesh the Gramdan movement spread over to Orissa and then gradually to the rest of the country. In Orissa it started with a boom and the district of Koraput

became one of the greatest centres of Gramdan in India. The total number of Gramdan received up to 31st December, in India was 34,477 villages. The number increased to 50,385 in January, and with the emergence of Sulabh gramdan the number went up to 1,68,058 in July. The Table No. 9 gives the statewise break-up of the gramdans received.

TABLE 9
Gramdan in India up to July 31, 1971

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>States</i>	<i>No. of Gramdan</i>
1.	Bihar	60,065
2.	Tamil Nadu	30,605
3.	Uttar Pradesh	32,963
4.	Orissa	12,636
5.	Madhya Pradesh	10,889
6.	Andhra Pradesh	4,231
7.	Maharashtra	4,625
8.	Mysore	1,924
9.	Rajasthan	2,067
10.	Panjab (Composite)	4,011
11.	Assam	1,682
12.	Gujarat	1,119
13.	West Bengal	748
14.	Kerala	418
15.	Delhi	74
16.	Jammu & Kashmir	1
Total :		1,68,058

SOURCE: *S. S. S. Rajghat, Varanasi.*

VII. BIHAR THE BIGGEST GRAMDAN CENTRE IN INDIA

Bihar is the biggest centre of Gramdan in India. Vinobaji has devoted much of his time to the people of Bihar during the last sixteen years of his padayatra. He made Bihar the test case of his life's mission—Bhoodan. Many important solutions were adopted and decisions taken here to make the movement more effective and fruitful. Bihar, indeed, has got a rich tradition of quick response to the call of saints and seers, of prophets and the path-finders. Lord Buddha and Mahavira made it the abode of their social Sadhana. Gandhiji evolved a unique technique of Satya-

graha in Champaran (Bihar) and Vinoba found Bihar the land of Gramdan revolution. Vinobaji set his feet on the soil of Bihar on September 14, 1952 with the missionary spirit and said, "As a pilgrim goes to Tirth-Yatra for God's Darshan—so also I have come out on this Bhoodan Pilgrimage. I have come here to let you bring about a revolution on the basis of love."¹¹ Vinobaji got favourable response from the people of Bihar. More than twenty-two lakh acres of land were collected during his first stay in Bihar. Vinoba toured Bihar thrice and covered almost every district. His Bhoodan Yatra in Bihar can be studied in the following three parts:

- (i) The Phase of concentrated experiment.
- (ii) The Stage of Bigha-Kattha Movement.
- (iii) The Period of Gramdan Toophan.

During the first period of his stay, i.e., September 14, 1952 to 31st December, 1954, Vinobaji concentrated his efforts in obtaining land for the landless. He has described this period as "Anand Yatra" (pilgrimage of joy). Many fruitful decisions were made here particularly in two conferences of Sarvodaya Samaj. Sampattidan Yajna and Jeewandan for the first time came to the notice of common people. The Chandil Conference evolved four-fold programme of constructive work, collection of five crore acres of land, Sampattidan and Sootanjali (Yarn-offering). The target of Bhoodan Yajna thus was fixed at five crore acres of land for the landless of the country.

The second stage of Vinobaji's Yatra definitely created a new movement in Bihar. It started with the donation of a twentieth part of a Bigha. Formerly, Vinoba was asking for one-sixth part of the land holdings. But he changed the view during his second visit to Bihar and started demanding a Kattha out of a Bigha. He said that previously only a few joined Bhoodan. But now with the new call for donating "Kattha" out of a Bigha all should join the movement. A Kattha would be easier to part with and simpler to manage.

11. Vinoba, Quoted in, S. Ram, *Progress of Pilgrimage*, p. 2.

It would create an atmosphere for self-generating gramdan. Vinobaji accepted it as a developing thought. It was an advancement from fine to finer action. Once a communist friend of Vinobaji criticised him for demanding such a smaller part. To this Vinoba remarked, "I have not gone down in my estimate. It is actually going up. Although it is a twentieth part and small: but it is to be given by one and all."¹² It would lend great strength to the movement if all join it. They would think automatically for Gramdan in the later stage. Vinobaji remained for forty-seven days (25th December, 1960 to 9th February, 1961) in Bihar during this visit and collected about 14,094 Katthas of land.

Vinobaji's third visit to Bihar has been described as "Toophan-Yatra". He himself has coined this word. It promises to bring about a revolution in Gramdan as seen never before. Vinobaji used this expression for the first time at Gopuri (Wardha) Conference of Sarvodaya Samaj held in May. Vinoba there declared, "It is my best and the last fight".¹³ And for the people of Bihar, Vinobaji fixed the target of collecting ten thousand villages in six months. With this aim of creating Typhoon Vinobaji came to Bihar for the third time on 11th September. Since that period the Gramdan movement has taken great strides and it reached the level of Ziladan. Up to 30th January, Vinobaji received 16,839 villages in Bihar along with the district dan of Darbhanga. And by October, all the villages of Bihar joined the Gramdan movement and paved the way for Bihar Dan.

VIII. SULABH GRAMDAN—THE LATEST PHASE

When in February, Vinobaji went to West Bengal for the second time, he introduced a new method of collecting gramdan with a view to revolutionising the Bhoodan mission. He named this new method as "Sulabh Gramdan" which means obtaining village donations in an easier and

12. *Bhoodan Yajna*, VII-21 (24-2-61), p. 1: "बीषा में कट्टा, दान दो इकट्ठा"!

13. *Bhoodan Yajna*, XI-26 (26-3-65), p. 1.

simpler way. Formerly, very hard conditions were laid down for a gramdan leaving no room for private incentive or what Vinobaji has called "the Kama and Artha Pravitti". Now the new method intends to synthesise both the incentives, giving greater scope for self-interest as well as the interest of the society. "In Sulabh Gramdan at least one-twentieth of total land donations is kept for the landless of the village. The rest of the land remains with the donors although the right of ownership of land is vested in the Gram Sabha."¹⁴

If 80 per cent of the people of a village donate their land or 50 per cent of the total land of the village is donated by the people—the village will be known as a Gramdani village. The whole village would be organised as one family and people would constitute Gram Sabha consisting of all the persons above twenty years. Apart from this general body, a Gram Samiti can also be formed to look after the day-to-day matters. The Sulabh Gramdan thus provides ample opportunity to the villagers to reconstruct the rural economy and organise the social life in the villages. The four main constituents of such Gramdans are:

- (i) The formation of Gram Sabha of which every adult is a member.
- (ii) Vesting the ownership of entire land with the village community which means Gram Sabha.
- (iii) The donation of one-twentieth of the land holdings to Gram Sabha for the sake of the landless.
- (iv) Setting up of a village fund (Gram Kosh) in which a fixed part of the income is regularly offered by the landlords and the wage-earners.

When Vinobaji visited Bihar for the third time in 1965, he made a request to take to "Sulabh Gramdan" and create a typhoon so that whole Bihar may come under its gripping influence. "This would be a new type of typhoon which would lead to light and life all around. A typhoon can be constructive, luminous and bright even as atomic power can be

constructive, productive and peaceful.”¹⁵ Vinoba’s call for Sulabh Gramdan has found a favourable response from the villagers all over the country. Vinobaji has collected more than one and a half lakh villages in the country up to July 1971, in which Bihar’s contribution was the greatest. “The whole of Bihar”, Vinoba proclaimed, “has to join Gramdan: It has to be accomplished.”¹⁶ Vinobaji’s Sulabh Gramdan is the latest phase of his Bhoodan mission. He had left Paunar Ashram for the second round of the country with a view to bringing about a revolution through “Sulabh Gramdan”.

IX. PRAKHAND DAN AND THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Prakhand dan is a natural consummation of Sulabh Gramdan. When Vinobaji started his Toophan Yatra his demand was ten thousand villages in six months. It was a great call of Vinobaji and the people responded to it wholeheartedly. While the movement spread throughout the country, Vinoba concentrated his efforts in Bihar to generate a typhoon of Gramdan. Vinobaji found a wider field and developed the mission to Prakhand dan—the donation of a unit which is popularly known as a Block consisting of hundred villages. It is a well defined unit which forms the basis of rural planning in our country.

“Prakhand dan is easier than Gramdan”,¹⁷ says Vinoba. People join it in large numbers because they derive direct help from the government at Block level. Our modern planning for villages is centred round the Block under the Community Development Programme. If the people of the villages form a larger social unit at the Block level they can have a say in the planning which is at present centrally directed. Prakhand dan will make people stronger to decide their own plan for rural reconstruction and development. Prakhand dan creates oneness. The people and the govern-

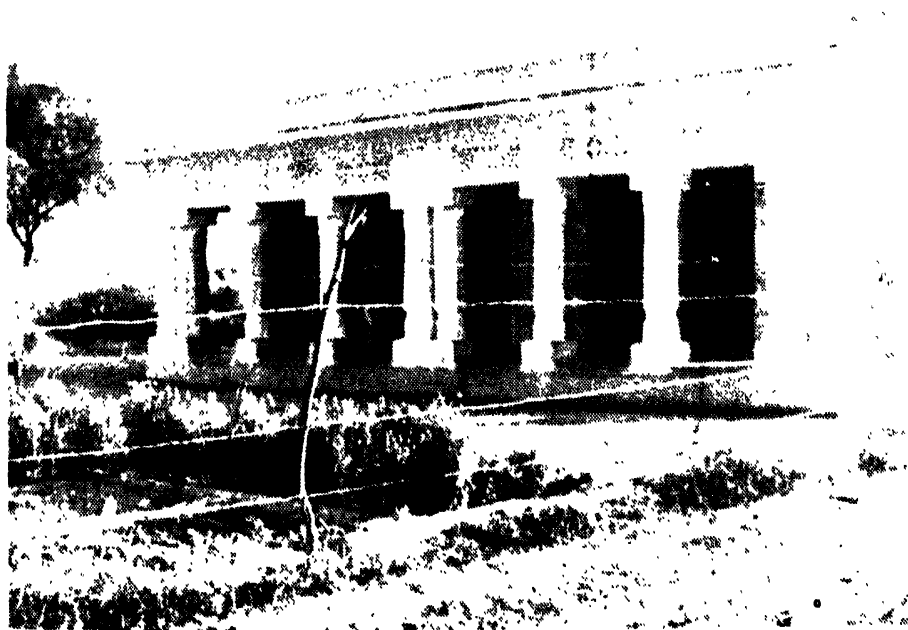
15. Vinoba and Jayaprakash Narain, *Gramdan for Gram Swaraj*, p. 54.

16. Vinoba, *Prakhand dan*, p. 3.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 12.



This is the first Gramdan Village Mangroth which paved the way for the Gramdan Movement in India.



The beginning of reconstruction. A school building of Mangroth constructed from the village-fund.



The author presenting his thesis—"Bhoodan Movement in India" to Vinobaji

ment will work together in villages. Donations below Prakhanda dan or Block will not solve all our problems. "If we have only a few Gramdans here and there", says Vinoba, "they will be like 'air-conditioned' gramdans. It is difficult to maintain them when the hot air is all around."¹⁸

The Prakhanda dan has become popular because it consolidates village activities and channelises the village potentialities in right direction. Land reforms, panchayats and village organisation become easy to handle. It is the finest and seems to be the "final" form of Vinobaji's non-violent revolution aiming at village industries and land donations. It generates compassion in the hearts of the people and establishes 'Samya Yoga'—the Summum-bonum of life.

The Community Development Programmes, which organise the villages at the Block level, are highly talked about in our country and a fierce criticism has centred round it. It has failed to attract the attention of the masses and develop into a "people's movement". The villages in India today are confronted with three types of programmes—Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Gramdan. The first is an imported programme, the second has been superimposed on the people whereas the third is the only programme representing India's spirit and tradition. The community development programme is unable to constitute a "Community" of villagers.¹⁹ The Panchayati Raj has failed to establish a social order based on equity and social justice. Jayaprakash Narayan, a prominent Sarvodaya leader, while criticising the misuse of power and money has remarked, "village money is dumped in from one side in the name of Community Development and power from the other in the name of Panchayati Raj."²⁰

One must, therefore, try to change the mental outlook of the people. The official programmes have become flat and stale. The only way out is to introduce Gramdan wherein lies the key to change the whole mind of the village.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

19. Vinoba, *Prakhanda dan*, p. 54.

20. *Gramdan for Gram Swaraj*, p. 81.

Prakhand dan creates a community life, as the right of ownership of land is voluntarily surrendered to Gram Sabha. The class distinctions of the higher and the low are abolished. As all work mutually for a common cause no question arises of social distinctions and caste concepts. Thus Gramdan virtually covers both the government sponsored programme of Community Development and Panchayati Raj. Admiring Vinoba's role the Development Commissioners' Conference at Mussoorie on 29th April, 1957, Late Pandit Nehru had remarked:

I agree with Acharya Vinobaji's ideal that land should be held in common by the people. The Bhoodan movement has great significance for what it has achieved and for the new psychology it creates about land and land holdings and about the terrific passion for private possession of land. The Gramdan villages offered the best chance of putting the idea of co-operative endeavour into effect, in view of the fact that the usual difficulties arising out of the individual ownership of land did not obtain there.²¹

Vinobaji's mission was also supported by the "All Party Conference" held at Yalwal in September 1957. It emphasised the need for co-ordination between Community Development Programme and Gramdan Movement.²² With the advent of Prakhand dan, a new dimension has been added to the Bhoodan Mission. The Community Development Programme can easily be adopted with full co-operation and greater success. The Union Government, under the Ministry of Community Development, has also opened a "Gramdan Cell" to assist the development programmes of Gramdan Villages.²³

A State-wise distribution of Prakhand dan up to July is given in Table No. 10.

21. Nehru's Inaugural Speech, "Commissioners' Conference", 29th April, 1957, quoted in, Siddha Raj Dhadha, *Gramdan*, p. 4.

22. *Bhoodan*, 111-4, (14-5-58), p. 30.

23. *Bhoodan Yajna*, XI-32 (7-5-65), p. 32.

TABLE 10
Prakhand Dan in India up to July

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>States</i>	<i>Prakhand Dan</i>
1.	Bihar	473
2.	Tamil Nadu	314
3.	Uttar Pradesh	186
4.	Orissa	70
5.	Madhya Pradesh	40
6.	Andhra Pradesh	15
7.	Maharashtra	17
8.	Mysore	14
9.	Rajasthan	2
10.	Punjab	7
11.	Assam	1
12.	Gujarat	3
Total :		1,249

SOURCE : S.S.S., Rajghat, Varanasi.

X. THE SUMMIT OF ZILADAN

The advancing steps of Bhoodan movement reached the summit when entire district of Darbhanga in Bihar was donated to Vinobaji on 19th February. The Prakhand dan in this way culminated in Ziladan. It was the climax of Vinoba's toophan-yatra which came out in a triumphant way. Darbhanga has opened the way to work for donation of the entire state. Vinobaji has interpreted Darbhanga as "Dwar Bang" which means the Door of Bengal. Vinobaji says that it has given incentive for Bihar Dan and has opened the way to Bengal as well.

A district is said to be a complete unit from organisational and administrative point of view. The donation of the district of Darbhanga in this way is of great importance. It has a population equal to Denmark and area about one-third of it. This indicates the power of non-violence and Vinobaji's success. It may be declared as a "Sarvodaya Administrative Unit" having all types of Sarvodaya activities and organisational work. Such step will have remarkable influence over other districts and more people would come to join the movement. This would give a chance to establish, what Vinobaji has called the united states of Sarvodaya Republics. After the district dan of Darbhanga, the

other districts of Bihar also joined the movement and it culminated in "Bihar Dan" when the donation of whole State was accomplished in October, 1969. The total number of district dan increased to 47 up to July 1971.

XI. THE PROBLEMS AND CONCLUSION

The Bhoodan mission which has taken a shape of Gramdan is facing many difficulties of organisational and technical character. Mere Gramdan is not enough. The internal resources at disposal must be fully mobilised and a body of workers be set up, immediately after Gramdan, to look after its affairs and organise the village on the right lines. It needs managerial and technical skill to take up such a task. As it is quite clear that Gramdan has paved the way of Block-Dan, the need now seems to be more important and urgent.

The first step is to obtain finance for rural development. The main agencies which supply credit in the villages are the Co-operative and Land Mortgage Banks. Here a difficulty arises regarding the security for loan, particularly when there is no private ownership of the land in Gramdan villages. The co-operative institutions do not advance credit to such villages. It is, therefore, very essential that each State should pass Gramdan Act to give them a legal status. The States like Rajasthan, Assam, Maharastra, West Bengal and Bihar have already passed the Act and others like Orissa, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh have made provision for the registration of Gramdan villages under Bhoodan Act. Yet the legal framework could not be completed in many States to devise all the necessary provisions for the success of Gramdan movement. To solve the immediate problem of credit, the Block development authorities should come to help the villages. To organise the village and provide technical help the "Gramdan Corps" and "Technical Corps" should be constituted up to the Block level. People may also have "Bullocks and Service Stations" on the lines of M.T.S. and R.M.S.²⁴ of Russia.

24. Machine and Tractor Stations were the State-run enterprises
(Continued on next page)

Gramdan, indeed, is a pivot of social and cultural life of the villages in India. Vinobaji calls it a "Defence measure".²⁵ Unless we organise the villages on Gramdan lines, we cannot save our country from the danger of what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has called "an ideological aggression".²⁶ Gramdan creates unity and oneness; brings peace and prosperity; offers the universal panacea of love and brotherhood and attunes with the hymn of Rig-Veda²⁷ for happy and healthier life.

(Continued from previous page)

in Russia which were charged with the task of rendering all sided aid to the collective farms and promoting the social enterprise, discipline and culture to the countryside. They have been re-organised into Repairs and Maintenance Stations.

25. *Sarvodaya*, XII-8 (Feb., 63), p. 287.

26. Nehru, "Gramdan will solve Problems", *Bhoodan Yajna*, IX-14 (4-1-63), p. 2.

27. *Rig Veda*, 1-114-1:

“विश्वं पुष्टम् ग्रामे अस्मिन् अनातुरम् ॥”

VII

From Gramdan to Gram Swaraj : The Political Economy of Decentralization

I. THE CONCEPT OF GRAM SWARAJ: ITS MEANING AND ECONOMIC INTERPRETATION

As Gramdan followed Gramdan in succession, a natural question posed itself. What next? How to organise village activities and what should be the shape and role of villages in the future planning of the country? Vinobaji was seriously thinking over the problem and arrived at the conclusion that Gram Swaraj should be the next step as it would provide for the people a better life and a better living. Bhoodan and Gramdan are merely a means to achieve the end—"Gram Swaraj" or Village-Self-Government. Vinobaji's main thesis behind this concept was to bring about a change in the economic and political set-up of the country and establish a new social order through peaceful means. The concentration of power at the centre or the state level would not make the people of the villages feel the true spirit of Swaraj until the powers are delegated to them and village autonomy is recognised in principle as well as implemented in actual practice. The appalling economic backwardness of the villages would never be eradicated by the far-fetched planning conducted by "the few elite" who live in Delhi and view at things through the smokescreen of their immense prosperity and centralized authority. The economic power in India should be decentralized as far as possible and villages should be made strong and self-reliant through a process of planning from below.

India has yet to win social and economic freedom so far as her more than five lakh villages forming the core of her economy are concerned. This freedom—Gram Swaraj—would ensure a better life and living to every individual. Though Gram Swaraj literally means village-self-rule, it has a deeper and wider connotation. It indicates democratic decentralization and carries with it a solid economic programme as well. In fact freedom remains lopsided if there is economic disequilibrium in a country. Political independence cannot be maintained without economic equality. Professor Laski maintained, "Political equality, therefore, is never real unless it is accompanied by virtual economic equality."¹ Gram Swaraj, therefore, aims at the politico-economic decentralization. It sanctions, on one hand, the political freedom to the people of the villages and on the other the economic power to plan their growth and development.

The term "Swaraj" though a synonym of "independent state" has here altogether a different and deeper interpretation. It is a compound Sanskrit word derived from two shorter words "Swa" and "Rajya" which signify "rule over self". Swaraj thus means self-discipline exercised by individuals to attain their economic and political ends. In its Vedic sense it is the highest attainment of an individual who exercises his authority over his body, mind and wisdom. Gram Swaraj thus recognises individual and social action for improving the economic life of the people. It puts premium on the spirit of service and co-operation. It aims at the "familisation" of society and the survival of the democratic spirit not only in the small units of the villages but the world at large. Gram Swaraj embodies a comprehensive programme for reconstructing the society and transcends the geographical barriers to encompass the whole humanity in its fold. It is universal and cosmopolitan in spirit and recognises the fundamental truth of love and sacrifice which forms the basis of unity among men and nations.

II. THE ANCIENT VILLAGE REPUBLICS OF INDIA

In India, the village communities have been in existence since the earliest times. Definite and clear evidence is available as to the existence of village republics in the Vedic and post-Vedic periods of Indian history. Even before that, during the age of pre-Aryan civilization these communities are supposed to have been in existence. The Indus-Valley culture could only have flourished on an elaborate system of agriculture and a rural economy based on villages.² While admiring the unshakable foundation of such communities, Dr. K.M. Panikkar has remarked, "The villages have remained the unchanging backbone of Indian Life. From one end of India to other the system prevails with but little local variations. It is the one foundation on which every empire in India has been reared." The system of village-self-government was the foundation of Aryan polity. This right of self-government made the people politically and economically strong. They established their own Panchayats and started administration wherein the head-man was regarded as the pivot of all organizational activities. He was known as "Gramini". His decisions were greatly honoured and sometimes even the judgements made by the kings were sent back to him for his opinion and final action.

In Chhandogya Upanishad there is a reference of an ideal state. In the kingdom of king Ashwapati there was no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no ignorant, no unchaste man and woman.³ It, therefore, implies an ideal form of government. The Manusmriti also refers to a sound village organization with regard to the defence and other activities of the village.⁴ The existence of "Gram Sanghas" or village federations in the Vedic age, representing true democratic spirit, is quite evident from the facts mentioned in the Shantiparva of Mahabharata where it has been told that the village self-

2. *A Survey of Indian History*, p. 9.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Chhandogyopanishad*, 5-11-5.

5. *Manusmriti*, 7/114-115.

governments were controlling the social, political and economic life in order to promote human dignity and social justice. People have had the republican system of greatest good to one and all and of co-operative living in the country long before the west could realise the importance of such a social order.⁶

The economic activities of the village self-government were founded on a sound system of production, distribution and taxation. The standards of life were carefully fixed and the purity in economic dealings of the society was to be maintained at every cost and the king himself was to be held responsible for the deviation from such standards if any. Kautilya who lived in 400 B.C. has described the nature and scope of state activities in his Arthashastra. The king was regarded as the trustee of the villages and was to regulate all types of economic and social activities. Agriculture and industries were the main occupations and flourished side by side. The peasants and merchants were held in high esteem and regarded as the backbone of the state economy. Thus one finds a picture of welfare economy in Kautilya's time where each village was the centre of light and learning governed by the discipline of its own rule.

These village communities of self-governing units survived in India even after the fall and rise of many dynasties and empires. Before the coming of Britishers in India, these "Republics" were firmly rooted in their soil but suffered a great setback at the hands of them who not only politically captured the country but crushed her completely through their cultural invasion. The whole history from Clive to Keynes is a painful story of an oppressed and suffering nation. Yet the village communities from within remained as strong as they were. Lord Elphinstone while commending their strength said, "These communities contain in miniature all the materials of a state within themselves and are almost sufficient to protect their members, if all other governments are withdrawn." Sir Charles T. Metcalfe, the

6. See *Rajdharmanushasanparv*—1, 81/29-30.

7. Elphinstone's "Report on the Territories Conquered from the Peshwa," quoted in R.C. Dutt, *Economic History of India*, (1757-1837), p. 239.

acting Governor-General of India in 1830, had also recorded:

The Union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all revolutions and changes which they have suffered and it is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence. I wish, therefore, that the village constitutions may never be disturbed and I dread everything that has a tendency to break them up.⁸

This makes sufficiently clear that the village republics were the bulwark of democracy in ancient India. Though the hereditary kingship of monarchy was recognised by the people as the dominant form of polity, the ancient village communities were functioning quite independently of the State. The State in India took different shapes from the Rig Vedic "Kingdom" to Monarchy of the Guptas and the great empires of the Mughals and the Britishers, yet the village community persisted and effectively developed on its own lines. The state had only a minor authority over them. These communities had exhibited two forms: one the territorial and the other the functional.⁹ The former was the basic unit of communal life which developed from small kingdom to larger republics but the latter had an inherent characteristic of division of work through occupation that found its expression in "Varnas". Though integrated as one, the community had a separate polity and economy. And the territorial and occupational divisions are the two facets of the same coin—separate in their sphere of work yet united in as one community.

III. THE GANDHIAN IDEAL OF GRAM SWARAJ

It was perhaps the clue from the ancient system of

8. Metcalfe's Minute of November 7, 1830, quoted in Dutt, *Ibid.*, p. 268.

9. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy*, ed. B. Prasad, p. 205.

political and economic organizations that made Gandhiji venture to establish "Gram Swaraj" which he often called "Ram Raj". His aim was to revive the old village culture in the present context of the world. His firm belief that the non-violent economy can only flourish in small units has held him to act for village republics instead of pleading for the Metropolis culture of highly industrialised order which thrives on exploitation and violence. If humanity has to exist, it must revert to a non-exploiting and simple economy. Gandhiji firmly believed that without truth and non-violence, the destruction of humanity is inevitable.¹⁰ He was convinced that if India is to attain true freedom then sooner or later the fact must be recognised that people will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces. They will then have no recourse but to resort to both violence and untruth.¹¹ The highly industrialized states, whether capitalist or communist, always try to extend their economic domain. Instead of colonialism, they create economic imperialism and dependencies.¹²

Gandhiji was, therefore, conscious of such disguised serfdom of an industrial civilization. He was striving to establish village Swaraj which according to him would be non-exploiting and decentralised, simple and self-sufficient, voluntary and co-operative. "My dream of village Swaraj", explained Gandhiji, "is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own foodcrops and cotton for its cloth."¹³ Gandhiji was of the opinion that villages should be self-sufficient for their daily needs. He also wanted to make villages self-disciplined so that no authority should dominate them except the discipline of good thought.

10. Pyarelal, *Towards New Horizons*, p. 4.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. M.K. Gandhi, *Village Swaraj*, ed. H.M. Vyas, p. 31.

Gram Swaraj, according to Gandhiji, is the foundation of true democracy in India. The so-called modern democracies are not real. They are mostly self-centred, party-dominated and power-oriented. The real democracy is the democracy of the poor, the lowliest and the lost. He, therefore, observed, "true democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village."¹⁴ Gandhiji thus stood for genuine and real democracy and that could be brought about only through non-violent revolution.

The exploitation, centralization and self-indulgence of the individual and his social behaviour are destroying the whole system of body-politic. It is, therefore, imperative to find out a self-determining, inter-related, ethico-economic polity to establish village Swaraj of Gandhiji's conception.

IV. VINOBA'S SWARAJ-SASTRA AND SARVODAYA ORDER

Vinobaji's Swaraj-sastra is the extension of Gandhian philosophy of non-violence in the realm of political and economic theory. He has observed minutely the principles of state regulation to conceive clearly the idea underlying "Swaraj". Gandhiji's practical approach to the problem was nonetheless important in formulating the theory of state or self-government. Vinobaji undertook the task of interpreting the fundamental principles which govern a non-violent political and social order.

(1) The Concept of State and People's Politics

Vinobaji makes a clear distinction between "Rajya" (government) and "Swaraj" (self-government). "A government can be had through violence. Self-government is impossible without non-violence."¹⁵ Swaraj can only exist in a peaceful and non-violent society. Vinoba has defined "Swaraj" as the government of each by each which means the government of all for all or Ram Rajya. A Rajya differs in spirit

14. *Ibid.* (Quoted in 'Preface'), p. XIII.

15. Vinoba, *Swaraj-Sastra*, p. 13.

from "Swaraj". Swaraj is a non-violent concept which is all embracing and humanistic. It has the basis of a disciplined life which is governed by the people themselves. But 'Rajya' or government fundamentally smacks of coercion. It rules through pressure and violence. In order to make his concept clear, Vinoba has laid down certain principles of an ideal state which distinguish it from other organizations.

According to Vinoba that government is best which governs the least. A government is not static organisation that runs on some rigid methodology but one that changes its path according to the levels of development desired in a society. The social and cultural changes, the changes in the levels of technology, and the structural and institutional changes alter the principles of State regulation and consequently upon them the forms of government also undergo a change. But in spite of all these changes, there are some fundamental principles which are universal and govern the state in establishing the permanent values of human life. In an ideal state the capable individuals are directed to the service of society. The people fully co-operate with each other and non-violence reigns supreme. Every work in the state if honestly performed has an equal value. Thus, the best government carries its affairs in such a manner as to lead the capable persons towards the service of society. Swaraj for Vinobaji means the total transformation of human life and the establishment of new values of truth, non-violence and compassion.

A society of such an order cannot be created by the politics of "power" (Rajniti) but by the politics of the people (Lokniti). Rajniti and Lokniti thus are different from each other. The power politics aims at the centralization of state authority and curtailment of individual liberty. But the politics of the people on the other hand recognises the freedom of action, devolves the power and creates the spirit of service and co-operation in the society. The former has an eye on office and position, the latter has an ideal of duty and dedication. It is, in this sense, that the Sarvodaya order stands for Lokniti. It represents the true spirit and culture of "Gram Swaraj".

(2) The True Democratic Values

It is only Lokniti which can establish true democratic values in society. The basis of such a democratic order is "Jan-Shakti" (The Power of the People) as opposed to "Dand-Shakti" (the legal power of the state). Jan-Shakti plays a vital role in the organisation of society and in its administration. But the people must be given real power and not fake. The present system of democracy spells the denial of such power. It does not recognise the organic nature of human society and regards man as a separate "head" or voter, ignoring his composite importance. Sri Jayaprakash Narayan while criticising the western democracy rightly remarked, "The whole process of democracy rests on the arithmetic of votes. The individual voter casts his vote as an atom of society, not as a living cell in the organic relationship with other living cells."¹⁶

It is at this juncture that Vinobaji introduces his own theory of true democratic values. Modern civilization needs social integration. Man should not be regarded as an isolated individual but integral part of the social frame-work. Self-governing communities built upon personal relationship, freedom of action and a common culture should be regarded as the basis of the modern social order. The purpose of a "more adequate democracy" is to bring the people to a common platform and teach them to participate in government — "a participating democracy."¹⁷ The true democratic values, therefore, are the familisation of society, common man's participation in the government, the freedom of choice and action, the creation of Jan-Shakti and above all "the right to commit mistake" as Gandhiji has put it while defining Gram Swaraj.¹⁸

(3) Vinoba's Triple Programme

Gram Swaraj is a comprehensive concept, and is not

16. Narayan, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

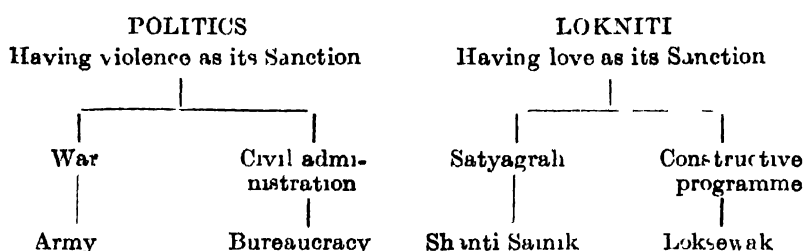
17. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

18. Vinoba and Jayaprakash Narayan, *Gramdan for Gram Swaraj*, p. 41.

confined to the political set-up alone. Vinobaji wants structural as well as institutional changes in the village society. It includes socio-political, ethico-economic and neo-structural changes in the social order. Gram Swaraj, as he conceives it, is a triple programme of purification, reconstruction and development. It is a trinity of Gramdan, village industries and Shanti Sena. Vinobaji's Gramdan movement forms the main basis of Gram Swaraj. It is an organization of the people where they voluntarily unite and discard the ownership of land. They create a certain harmony among themselves and a distinct consciousness which encourages a feeling of collective and of community spirit.¹⁹ But Gramdan alone will not suffice, maintains Vinoba, unless it is accompanied by village industries and Shanti Sena. He, therefore, has chalked out a three-fold programme embracing all the important aspects of village life. Village industries are the backbone of rural economy. In a country like ours where capital is scarce and man-power is in abundance and mostly engaged in agriculture, the village industries are highly essential. There should be no technological objections in adopting these industries. The indigenous labour force—full time or part time—and the raw materials which are easily available in the villages provide a healthy atmosphere for rural industries. These industries not only supplement the income of the people but also reduce the growing pressure of the population on land. Vinobaji, therefore, has made village industries an integral part of the Gramdan movement. Shanti Sena is the third programme whose importance can hardly be exaggerated. It is composed of a band of selfless workers who strive for maintaining peace and serve the society with their steadfast devotion. This "peace-brigade" plays a great role in the organization of Gramdan villages and create a spirit of service and sacrifice among the people.

A Shanti Sainik is a devoted servant of the people who looks after the village affairs in a selfless way and tries to be an ideal for others with regard to his integrity and

social behaviour. Thus, the trinity of Gramdan, village industries and peace brigade form the basis of India's rural reconstruction through a non-violent process. "Gramdan generates common will. Khadi (and village industries) gives the economic resource and Shanti-Sena enlarges the sphere of peace and non-violence."²⁰ Hence Vinobaji has outlined this triple programme for the villages so that 'the country may usher in a new period of prosperity of Gram Swaraj. The following chart indicates the new 'set-up' as compared with the old system of "politics":



V. GRAMDAN AND PANCHAYAT RAJ: -THE DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION

(1) The Origin and Significance of Panchayat Raj

It was a matter of great satisfaction that government realised the importance of democratic decentralization. The Balwantrai Mehta Committee (1957) had strongly recommended for an easy and direct process of people's participations in the framework of local units to accelerate the development programmes of the country. The Committee had also realised that too much power had been centralized in a few hands and very little active co-operation was offered by the people in making the national planning a success.

It was with a view to devolving power that Panchayati Raj was introduced in India. The decentralization of political power is highly necessary if the common people want to establish their own rule. Panchayat Raj stands for the right of self-determination and for forming the village gov-

20. C.A. Menon, "Gram Swaraj through Gramdan", *Bhoodan*, VIII 48, (28-3-64), p. 376.

ernment which implies the direct participation of the individual in the social and political activities of the community.

Panchayat Raj is an attempt to decentralize democratic institutions. But it must be noted that the true Panchayats are not "local-self-government" as this means only partial and piecemeal decentralization.²¹ It is something more—the sharing of the sovereign power. In the constitution of our country Article 40 lays down that the state shall take steps to organise village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government. "Here the implication of the word "Unit" is that the Panchayats were not to exist and function in isolation, but were to form parts of larger units. This aspect of the matter is of great importance because it puts Panchayat Raj in quite a different light and endows it with great significance."²² It implies that Panchayats are the representative units of government and not merely bodies to execute the development programmes. They are the little sovereign states which form the base for the entire democratic set-up. But the present three-tier system of Panchayati Raj consisting of Panchayats, Panchayati Samitis and Zila Parishads comes to an abrupt end at the district level and closes the door for "participating democracy" at the higher levels.

(2) The Essentials of Panchayati Raj

It is here that one realises how incomplete is the picture of Panchayati Raj which neither forms an effective link with the state and the union government nor establishes the community life of an organic character. The "atomistic polity" prevails. Sri Jayaprakash Narayan has pointed out that the system suffers from many a defect: (a) it lacks an integrated social philosophy, (b) has no community concept, (c) lacks balanced "Rurban" equation and (d) touches only the lowest rung of the ladder of district administration.²³ In

21. S.S. Khara, *District Administration in India*, p. 202.

22. *Bhoodan*, VI-19 (26 8 61), p. 147.

23. Narayan, *op. cit*, p. 225.

order to encompass the whole country in the fold of Panchayati Raj an integrated programme of Panchayat units has been envisaged: There ought to be local communities, regional and state level communities and the national community. Beginning with Gram Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad the whole organisation should go up to form Rajya Parishad and Rastra Parishad. In this way we would have a net work of Panchayati Raj of totally organic and truly decentralized character.

(3) **The Role of Gramdan in Panchayati Raj**

Panchayati Raj as an integrated social organization can only be established through Gramdan. The present panchayat system is election-centred, party dominated and power oriented. The Panchayati Raj these days faces a great peril.²⁴ It is unable to create a community life among the people. As elections are "fought" on the party basis, fissiparous tendencies crop up. The mass poverty and illiteracy, the higher and lower caste concepts and the "owner" and the "worker" mentality have led the villages to the most unhappy consequences. The conditions prevailing in the villages are still more or less same as they were before the independence. Panchayati Raj needs an atmosphere of co-operation and fellow-feeling, of love and sympathy and of service and sacrifice which the old village pattern was hardly efficient to provide for.

It is in this respect that we find Gramdan a suitable instrument for establishing Panchayati Raj. Gramdan creates a right climate for Panchayat organizations. "It offers the desired key to change the whole mind of village."²⁵ The Gramdan movement of Vinobaji brings about a great revolution by getting the land voluntarily surrendered in the name of Gram Sabha—the general body of the village. It makes all people equal. When the right of ownership is discard-

24. Vinoba and Narayan, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

ed by the people themselves, their coming together and working for a common cause becomes easier and effective.

The organization of Gramdan Village is quite different from that of the Panchayati Raj. Gramdan villages are partyless and election-free. The decisions by the Gram Sabha are taken unanimously and no defections are possible among the people. There are no distinctions between the high and the low or between the poor and the rich. But in Gram Panchayats the party-politics plays a greater role than the "politics of the people". The spirit of power dominates the Panchayat rather than the spirit of service. Again, the "majority" forms the deciding factor instead of unanimity or decision by "Consensus". The real Panchayati Raj, therefore, is possible only through Gramdans. The success of the Panchayati Raj depends upon economic and structural changes which are brought about by the Gramdan movement. "The truth is that nothing can succeed in villages unless one brings about an economic revolution."²⁶

Gramdan brings people together, unites them for a common cause and makes them responsible and responsive citizens which no other movement can possibly do. No amount of activities and progress of Panchayati Raj can bring about as vital a change in the society as the Gramdan movement is capable of because it goes deep into the hearts of the people to find out the hidden treasure of love and sympathy, of fellow-feeling and co-operation.

VI. THE ECONOMICS OF DECENTRALIZATION

Gram Swaraj seems to be impossible unless the economic base is strengthened and the Gramdan programme is accelerated and effectively controlled. The basis of such an order is the complete decentralization of the economic forces in the society.

The decentralization is a process through which means of production and distribution are not centrally controlled but are maintained by small democratic units to regulate the

economy in the interest of the society as a whole and not of any group or individual. It is thus a system in which individuals as well as their organisations safeguard the interest of the society without seeking their selfish narrow ends. Such an economy is essentially a non-violent and non-exploiting one. It aims at just and equitable distribution of private and social gains. Here social gains or institutional profits should not be confused with the profit motive philosophy or a centralized economy which thrives on exploitation and excessive control. The gains of the institutions under such a decentralized economy are the community-gains which are properly invested in productive spheres for the good of the community itself. The purpose of such a production is to utilize fully local resources, for providing maximum employment to the people and also to satisfy their needs locally. Ordinarily, in a decentralized economy the basic requirements of the community are met by the local resources with such exceptions as minerals, plantation products and engineering goods, etc., where centralized control on production is inevitable. Even here democratic control over them is such as not to deviate much from the adopted path of decentralization.

We must here note that decentralization does not mean dispersal of industries. Dispersion implies "scatteredness" that may take various forms. "A centralized industry may organize its production in small units dispersed over a large area (such units would, in spite of being dispersed, be subjected to the same method of centralized control). Another form of dispersal would be the production of different parts of one final product in small independent units and assembling them at a common place. A third form of dispersal would be the giving of more or less autonomous authority to different units while keeping them subject to the same central co-ordinating authority."²⁷ But such dispersion cannot be characterised as decentralization. A decentralized economy is that which integrates the industry with the life of whole community. The dispersion of industry means economic and

biological exploitation of human resources.²⁸ The large scale industries are dispersed with a positive view to attaining profits from geographical, functional and occupational methods of industrial division. A true decentralized order means industrial integration through small productive units, small capital investment and by rendering the work less irksome and maintaining good social and economic relations.²⁹

(1) **The Need for Balanced Economic Growth**

A decentralized order seeks for a balanced economic development in the society. A centralized order stands on a weak foundation with a heavy top that can topple down at any time and thus involves a good risk. In this economy, therefore, the persons who are at the helm of affairs dominate indiscriminately. With the centralization of economic power, the political power also tends to concentrate and the whole picture of freedom in the name of free enterprise is damaged. Some people gain economic strength while others remain quite subordinated to them. For a balanced economic development, therefore, decentralization is highly necessary. A balanced economy aims at the wholesome progress of each and every individual and tries to integrate the social and economic life of the people. The growing socio-economic disparity, lack of co-ordination between labour and capital, the class and caste distinctions have led the society suffer heavily. Nature's balance has also been disturbed. With the growth of industrial civilization and the city-centred economy, the villages started losing their strength, and the soil its fertility. The highly fertile tropical soil of Sind was reduced to a barren desert by the great city population of the past.³⁰

We must not, therefore, forget that there is a closer economic and biological linkage running through Nature. Plants and animals together with the micro-organism in the soil form one community.³¹ A balanced economy thus means to re-

28. Pyarelal, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

29. *Bhoodan*, V-31 (19 11-60), p. 247.

30. Pyarelal, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

turn to Nature what is taken away from it. It is also true in case of the social organism. A balanced social system has an ideal of returning to the society in organic form what is taken out of it. It, therefore, cannot be an economy of violence, exploitation and unlimited wants. Such an economy is necessarily one which is peace loving and humanitarian. "Like a family", observes Jayaprakash Narayan, "this economy is interested not only in its present members but even in those who are unborn...A balanced economy is concerned with the future generation also, that is, with life rather than death." This economy thus takes great care in using non-renewable resources of Nature with a view to preventing the economy from suffering avoidable waste."

(2) The Question of Village Self-sufficiency

It is in this context that the idea of village self-sufficiency comes into picture. Village must be made self-sufficient in order to have a sound and integrated economic growth. The self-reliant villages would be reducing the impact of heavy industrialization by substituting a decentralized order of production. The self-sufficient villages would be independent economic units, relying on their own resources for basic needs yet dependent on others for the commodities which are not locally produced—dependent not in an atomised form, but as a meaningful component of an organic social system. This self-sufficiency is highly desirable for various reasons. Firstly, it gives incentive to community living when people work and share life together. Secondly, it creates independent local leadership and enterprise. And thirdly, it generates a self-sustaining strength in the event of any misfortune or economic depression.³² A self-sufficient village economy is strong enough to fight even against the forces of monetary and fiscal disruptions as it chiefly utilizes local resources and can possibly maintain itself for a longer period during the crises. It is thus also a defence measure from an economic point of view.

32. Narayan, *op. cit.*, 219.

33. Bhoodan, V-31 (19-11-60), p. 247.

34. A.E. Morgan, *The Community of the Future*, pp. 125-26.

If we are to maintain Nature's equilibrium then the bulk of the consumer's goods should be locally produced and consumed. This can be achieved through regional planning which forms an essential part of a non-violent order. "The foundation of the economy of permanence", says Jayaprakash Narayan, "can be laid only on the firm rock of regional self-sufficiency, or as Gandhi called it *Swadeshi*".³⁵ The self-sufficiency, according to Gandhi, means that villages must be self-sufficient in regard to food, cloth and other basic necessities.³⁶ The Gandhian concept of self-sufficiency is not narrow in out-look. To be self-sufficient is not to be self-contained.³⁷

The self-sufficient economy has a network of concentric circles of productive resources and requirements. Thus the lesser the degree of a requirement, the bigger will be the circles of self-sufficiency.³⁸ It is like demarcating the area of operation where the goods and services are easily produced and demanded. The industries in a self-sufficient economy, for example, may be divided for economic reasons as village industries, block level industries, and others that are district, state and union level industries.³⁹ In the same way the area can be marked for self-sufficiency in respect of many other goods and services. Thus for cereals and cloth, say, ten villages around can seek self-sufficiency. The articles of daily use of lesser importance may be made on a taluqua-wise basis. The building materials and heavy electrical and engineering goods which are important but are utilised slowly and sparingly may have an area of self-sufficiency to the level of the state or the nation as a whole. The only way of judging such division is to go by the intensity of requirement and availability of the commodity concerned.⁴⁰ Thus the self-sufficient economy creates its own

35. Pyarelal, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

36. M.K. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 63

37. *Ibid.*

38. D.K. Gupta, "*Pattern of Decentralisation*", *Bhoodan*, VII-4, (19-5-62), p. 29.

39. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Swaraj for the People*, p. 26.

40. Gupta, *Loc. cit.*

productive spheres or functional area, where the people try to satisfy their needs from what is locally available and co-ordinate their efforts for building a new social order based on democracy and decentralization.

(3) The Problem of Planning from Below

In order to achieve a balanced economy and self-sufficiency the whole set-up of planning has to be re-oriented. As most of India's population lives in villages, the economic planning must also begin from villages. The vast majority of people living in these villages form the base of Indian economy. But the base has become so weak that it is unable to bear the burden of the heavy structure placed on the top. And in such a situation whatever is being done from the above in the name of village planning is hardly satisfactory.

Planning, therefore, must start from below. At present the national planning attempts to force plan down the throats of the people from the top, whereas the villagers remain unconsulted and their views about their own needs are ignored so far as planning matters are concerned. A centralized planning often proves to be ineffective and inefficient so far as the village development is concerned because it only views the villages from a distance; even a vast bureaucracy can't do very much.⁴¹ For effective rural planning it is essential that it must begin from below. And for its success a band of selfless workers are also needed who may replace the bureaucratic set-up. "A plan from below can be sustained only by 'an army of selfless workers,' unlike the bureaucratic machine that has to multiply its personnel and execute a plan from above."⁴²

It has, therefore, been suggested that people must plan for themselves. The rural planning of such a decentralized form is now possible with the evolution of the concept of Gramdan. Acharya Vinoba Bhave who originated the idea of

41. E.F. Schumacher, *Roots of Economic Growth*, p. 27.

42. *Bhoodan*, VII-30 (10-11-62), p. 23.

Gramdan, has paved the way for village planning on the lines of Sarvodaya philosophy. Building from the bottom means laying down the foundation first and then to start erecting building brick after brick, storey by storey." The villages of India must be so planned as to cover the entire economy in their fold and prepare a sound foundation for infra-structures to rest in peace and firmness. Here the planning would begin from primary units and therefrom far onward. If the village finds it difficult to form an economically working unit, the plan can be extended to the regional level." Whatever be the area covered under plan the basic philosophy would remain the same, i.e., building the country from the bottom on sound foundations of democracy.

VII. ESTABLISHMENT OF AGRO-INDUSTRIAL VILLAGE REPUBLICS*

While centralized planning aims at heavy industrialization, the decentralized planning advocates an agro-industrial economy. In an economic democracy where self-sufficiency and "participating planning" form the core of development, an agro-industrial base is absolutely necessary. Agriculture and village industries should go hand in hand. In an economy where human resources are cheap and available in abundance, large scale industrialization is not only undesirable but may prove to be even disastrous as it results in unemployment and leads to recession in the economy. As the country is pre-eminently an agricultural country and the majority of the people live in villages, we can't wholly neglect its agrarian aspect and rural character. The villages of India must find proper place in planning. A compromise formula must, therefore, be evolved to set up industries side by side agriculture. It is in this sense that a synthesis in the form of agro-industrial economy has been evolved. A middle course has been adopted to suggest decentralized industries along with agriculture.

43. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy*, ed. B. Prasad, p. 220.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

Before the advent of the British the country had a good system of agriculture supported by a network of cottage industries. But the rapid industrialization and the western impact on the economy crushed the very basis of its sustenance. The village industries were destroyed and the people were left alone to fall upon land which itself was not sufficient to provide all with food and shelter. It was after independence and with the establishment of the democratic set-up that the people started thinking about resorting the two mainstays of Indian economy—agriculture and village industries. The people simply could not do it earlier. It was with the discovery of Gramdan that people began to realise the importance of self-reliance and self-government. The creation of agro-industrial republics was thus a necessary step towards establishing Gram Swaraj.

(1) **The Rural-Urban Equation**

The usual trend everywhere is towards heavy industrialization and urbanization. It leads to the extinction of the village community. The growing population of cities at the rate of thirty-five lakhs every year and a great drive towards cities from villages have created many problems. Life has become stale and flat in both, the cities and the villages. The rural-urban equation has become unbalanced and meaningless. Sri Jayaprakash Narayan has suggested that for a proper balance agriculture and industry must be carried on together in an interdependent and complementary manner. There may be exceptions...but the predominant character of the primary community must become agro-industrial.⁴⁵

In the present set-up of society the hiatus between the town and the village is developing fast. The cities dominate the village—their hinterland. The big cities in turn are dominated by the metropolis. The cycle of exploitation thus moves on. Though from a distance the development of industries in the metropolitan areas seems to be an encouraging feature, a close study would reveal how ruthlessly it saps the rural economy. It means “a further extinction of non-

agricultural production in rump (village) economy.”⁴⁶ In a country like ours agriculture does not show a high productivity and the rural-urban population ratios are so disproportionate that the rural sector finds it difficult to cope with the demands of the urban sector.” It is perhaps for this reason that Sri Jayaprakash Narayan demands complete abolition of the rural-urban concept. The economy which he visualises “will be neither urban nor rural, it will be if a name has to be given to it communitarian”.⁴⁸ Science and the new technology can help in narrowing down the gap between the urban and the rural sectors—between the city and the village.

(2) The Levels of Technology

Evidently, the agro-industrial economy is not opposed to science and technology. In fact this new economy “will make the full use of science and technology so as to secure the ends of their (the people) life...”⁴⁷ Science must serve humanity. Science must change its course aligning itself with the changing course of society. For a decentralized and communitarian society, for instance, science will have to develop its own technology. It is in this context also that the agro-industrial technology will differ from the modern technology.

Here again one must be careful in adopting the desired level of technology. The level of technology of an under-developed country must differ from the technology adopted by an economically advanced country. In the hope of acquiring economic stability and power, the developing countries sometimes adopt a higher level of technology and take a long “jump” over the intermediary stages of development. But such an attempt is not always free from danger.

The adoption of a higher level of technology by an

46. Suchumacher, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

47. *Ibid.*

48. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy*, ed., B. Prasad, p. 221.

49. *Ibid.*

under-developed country is neither economically beneficial nor socially desirable. It creates unemployment by displacing the worker from the job and also costs more as regards the capital investment "per-work-place."⁵⁰ Moreover, the low cost products of the high level technology cannot be so advantageous as the higher cost products of a lower level of technology especially when the labourers have no alternative employment. There is a social gain in high cost products as the labourers have no "opportunity cost"⁵¹ (no alternative job). It was for this reason that Gandhiji pleaded for Khadi which, though costly as compared to the mill cloth, was socially profitable.

(3) The Rural Industrialization

Keeping the above facts in view, the Indian economy does not seem to provide much scope regarding a wide range of heavy industrialization. The reasons are obvious: firstly, because the country is predominantly an agricultural one and will apparently continue to be for some decades still and secondly, because the economy has a large untapped human potential in the abundant labour supply. Heavy industrialization, under such circumstances, can lead only to the creation of certain "islands" or "pockets" of industrial development but the country by and large shall continue to be agrarian.

The industries, therefore, should be based on the indigenous resources of labour and capital and a level of technology should be so evolved as to provide for greater employment opportunities to the people with the minimum investment. The great idea of the planners to "jump" from bullock-cart to jet engine, so to speak, would smash our whole economy.⁵² The industrialization must not be centralised and villages should be given ample opportunity to industrialize themselves in the manner they need and desire.

50. Schumacher, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

The only possible pattern for wholesome progress of the villages and the country as a whole would be to adopt agro-industrial economy.

The village industries may be developed in several forms. They may be owner-worker type or co-operative-communal type. The owner-worker type will mostly be household industries confined to a family or some individuals. The co-operative-communal type will be bigger in size and can either be the co-operatives of employees or the bodies of employees themselves. Under such industrial set-up the cottage industries or their bigger forms will not be isolated units but would be integrated with district, state or even national level industries. In case of basic or key industries where centralization is inevitable the communal ownership of the means of production has been recommended under the new order. The industrial units from village to national level would form their federation in order to seek a common industrial policy and integrated growth.

Thus in the new order there will be no conflict between the labour and the capital. The owner-worker type industries or the social ownership of means of production leave no room for any such conflict. This new order envisages perfect harmony among the people without creating any distinction of the rich and the poor or of caste and creed. In such an order where economy is basically peace loving and society is essentially self-disciplined, the end of Gram Swaraj can easily be attained. It is for this purpose that Vinobaji is demanding more and more Gramdans to achieve Gram Swaraj or Ram Raj (The Kingdom of God).

VIII



Establishing Gram Swaraj—The Survey of a Gramdan Village—Mangroth



The glimpses of Gram Swaraj are now easily visible in the Gramdan villages donated to Vinobaji where the constructive programmes are being enthusiastically carried out. These Gramdan villages have their own planning for development and reconstruction. With their limited resources they try to become self-reliant and self-sufficient so far as the basic necessities of life, more specifically, food and clothing are concerned. Forgetting all pretensions of ownership, they pool their lands for common use and try to live with co-operation and in a spirit of mutual help. There is a decentralized pattern of all economic activities. They concentrate mostly on cottage industries and convert local raw materials into finished products. It is their earnest effort to live quite independently and run their administration through a Sarvodaya Mandal consisting of all the adult members (men and women) of the village. Having faith in non-violence, they settle their disputes amicably and try to live like a family. All this results in their having very peaceful life and confirms the efficacy of true Gram Swaraj which has been the basic need of the country and is the ultimate end of the Bhoodan movement.

I. MANGROTH—AN INTRODUCTION

Mangroth is a village in Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh, situated on the right bank of the Betwa—a tributary of the Jamuna. It was on May 24, 1952, when Vinoba-

ji received this village as donation from its landlords. While donating the said village its landlords with one voice declared that they had willingly relinquished their old-age concept of ownership of land for the sake of the all-round progress of the village on the basis of love and economic justice as contemplated by Vinobaji.

Although up to that period more than twenty thousand acres of land was given to Vinobaji, yet this particular donation consisting of a full village gave a new and much needed fillip to the Bhoodan movement. Never before in the history of nations such event had taken place as that of Gramdan, when on a non-violent appeal, the villagers themselves discarded their right of ownership and donated the entire land of the village to the movement. The people of Mangroth, to tell the truth, will go down in history as the pioneers of the Gramdan movement.

(1) **General Situation**

Mangroth is a village in the Sarila Block of Rath tehsil of the district Hamirpur. It is sixteen miles south of Orai, the nearest railway station from the village. From Orai there is a road link up to Mangroth. The village stands on a plateau of the Bundelkhand region. The river Betwa forms the north-eastern boundary of the village while to the south-west of the village flows the river Dhasan that forms the boundary of the district. About sixteen miles south of Mangroth is the tehsil headquarters—Rath. Mangroth in this way is equidistant from Orai and Rath.

The normal rainfall of the village is 25" to 30". The rainy season begins from June and lasts up to September. The Monsoons are not very heavy and the temperature varies from 16° C in winter to 38° C in summer. Topographically the village land may be classified as Kabar, Rankar and Kachhar. Kabar is the medium quality of land while Kachhar is the best for the purposes of cultivation. Rankar land is regarded as of the lowest grade and is hard to till and less fertile. The vegetation found in the village may be classed as "arid-zone vegetation". It consists of small and

big bushes, thorny babul trees and other dry-forest products. A type of small thorny plant locally called "Dhau" is widely found in the village. About 2,500 acres of the village-land is covered with such forests.

(2) The Area and Land Utilization

The total land belonging to Mangroth is 3,588.26 acres. About 828.25 acres, i.e., 23.4 per cent is cultivable land and the rest is either fallow or covered with dry forests, small bushes, tanks or the settlements. The village record (Khasra) shows the following land-statistics:

TABLE 11
Land Statistics of Mangroth (in acres)

(i) <i>Cultivable land :</i>	828.25
(ii) <i>Fallow, Wasteland, and Tanks, etc. :</i>	
	9.42 Tanks
	1.00 Garhi
	1.89 Bhitā
	1,621.79 Wasteland & Ravines
	0.36 Band
	1.42 Garden
	554.82 Barren
	107.99 Old fallow
	223.09 New fallow
	2,521.78
(iii) <i>Land Under other Uses :</i>	
	0.05 Graveyard
	88.15 River
	29.27 Pathways
	68.60 Nala
	19.90 Road
	17.06 Sand
	15.20 Settlements
	238.23

SOURCE : Sarvodaya Mandal Records, Mangroth.

Out of the cultivable land measuring 828.25 acres about 150 acres is covered with weeds. Thus the actual land available for cultivation comes to 678.25 acres. After the Gramdan, however, an addition of about 100 acres of fallow land has been made to the net cultivable area. There is now approximately 778 acres of land under cultivation. About 450 acres of land remains under Kharif Crop and 300 acres

under Rabi Crop. Approximately, 20 to 25 acres of land is used for dams and river-side cultivation.

(3) Population and Caste Divisions

The village has a population¹ of 825 persons with 137 households belonging to 23 castes. The Table No. 12 shows the caste-wise division of the households:

TABLE 12

Total Households 137		Population 825	
<i>Castes</i>	<i>Number of households</i>	<i>Castes</i>	<i>Number of households</i>
Ahir	11	Khagar	3
Basor	3	Khatig	4
Brahmin	9	Kewat	15
Blacksmith	1	Kori	21
Barber	3	Kumhar	1
Carpenter	1	Lodhi	9
Chamar	29	Muslim	1
Dhimar	4	Shepherd	3
Goldsmith	1	Thakur	2
Josi	2	Teli	4
Kayastha	1	Varsh	1
		Washerman	8

II. HISTORY OF THE GRAMDAN

(1) The Opinion Formation

Diwan Shatrughan Singh, one of the richest landlords of the village and a devoted social worker, has had in his mind, since the early years of his life, a revolutionary idea of bringing about a change in the social and economic set-up of the village. He had actively participated in the freedom movement of the country and had commanded great respect among the local people as a true patriot and their able guide.

It was in 1952 that Sri Shatrughan Singh attended the Sarvodaya Conference at Sevapuri, Varanasi. He met Vinobaji and was highly impressed by the ideology and the working of the Bhoodan mission. He invited Vinobaji to come to his home-district Hamirpur and the village Mangroth.

1. At the time of investigation, i.e., Oct., 1967.

On his return to Mangroth Diwan Shatrughan Singh consulted the village people about donating the whole land of the village to Vinobaji. This being, of course, a wholly novel experiment, the simple village people did not at first fall in with it. Diwanji then met the landholders individually, explained his idea and told them about the new pattern of life which he wanted to bring to the village through Vinoba's movement. The people then started thinking about it and wanted some time to come to a decision. They were mostly divided on the issue of Gramdan. Out of sixty-seven landlords, perhaps except a few Sirdars, all remained undecided till Acharya Vinoba himself entered the district of Hamirpur and encamped at Makarechha—a village on the other side of Betwa.

In the morning of 23rd May, 1952, Vinoba crossed the river and came to Mangroth. But it shocked the villagers to note that Vinoba had his programme of halting at Itailia (a village five miles away from Mangroth) instead of staying at Mangroth. What was their fault? Why the saint was not staying with them? These were the natural questions agitating every one in the village. At last they attributed this to their failure to donate their lands to Vinoba. The fact was otherwise. Vinoba had already fixed his programme according to which he halted at Mangroth only for a short while and left the village on his way to Itailia.

It was their moral defeat, the people of Mangroth thought. They were pained to think that they did not obey Diwanji and remained divided on the issue of Gramdan. The effect of Diwanji's advice was working on their minds. They set themselves to thinking again over the Diwan's sincere advice of donating the entire land of the village to Vinoba.

(2) Towards Gramdan

The day when Vinobaji left Mangroth "without any dan" made the people restless. They thought that they had not "honoured" the saint as was expected of them. But still

the concept of Gramdan was not clear to them. They, therefore, called on Diwanji and asked him to explain its meaning and interpretation. Diwan Shatrughan Singh then told the people that the land would remain with them; only the ownership would have to be discarded. It was like sharing one's food with God, he added.

This convinced the villagers. Some due to their true understanding, some inspired by social and co-operative spirit and some imbued with a sense of service and sacrifice, joined the Gramdan movement and signed their donation deeds. The donations were finalised by the mid-day of 24th May, 1952. Except Mania²—a land owner—all had left the ownership of the land which they had so far possessed.

Vinoba halted at Rath on May 24. Diwan Shatrughan Singh went to him with those donation deeds. Prostrating himself at the feet of the Saint, he surrendered the whole village to Vinobaji adding humbly that it was only a small gift from the people of Mangroth.

It came as a surprise to Vinoba. For a moment he could not believe it. The first Bhoodan he had received a year back and now he got an entire village in donation. Was not this the Will of God? Vinoba questioned himself. The two points made a line and the path was clear before him. From Bhoodan to Gramdan was thus the natural step.

III. THE CHANGING PATTERN OF THE VILLAGE

(1) Land Holdings and Their Re-distribution

At the time of Bhoodan there were 67 landholders in the village. Initially, only three landlords, namely, Shiva Kumar Paliwal, Diwan Shatrughan Singh and Omkar Singh had owned the entire land of the village. But the Zamindari Act abolished this system and brought two categories of landholders, viz., Sirdars and Bhumidhars. There were thirty-one Sirdars and thirty-six Bhumidhars in the village

2. He later on joined the Gramdan by donating his land on 26th April, 1957

when the Gramdan took place. Sirdars were occupying an area of about 529.59 acres of land and paying Rs. 1,088.66 as land revenue to the Government. Bhumidhars had acquired the rights of ownership of about 269.1 acres of land with an annual rent payable to the government as Rs. 378.14. In actual practice, however, Sirdars were getting the land cultivated by others and had the same dominant position in the village as prior to the abolition of Zamindari.

There were forty landless households in the village. Their percentage of the total households (in 1952 the number of households was 107) was 37.7 in 1952. They mostly belonged to scheduled and backward classes and worked as agricultural labourers. As the land owners themselves had only small holdings, mostly below twenty acres of land, it was very difficult for the landless to get full time employment on those holdings. They were working as casual and attached labourers and had to depend on the resources of their employers. Some of them had to go outside the village to seek employment and supplement their income.

When the Gramdan was declared in May 1952, a scheme of re-distribution of land was adopted. As the ownership was abolished it was easy for the villagers to come to a decision. It was decided that each landless family must be provided with at least three acres of land and that each landholder should not have less than seven acres of land. These two lower limits were fixed for the landless and the landholders respectively. The landholders were to contribute one-fifth part of their land for the landless. Thus about 150 acres of land was obtained as the one-fifth share from the landholders. About fifty acres of fallow land was also reclaimed for this purpose after the Gramdan. So the total land made available for the re-distribution to the landless was about 200 acres. It was kept in mind at the time of re-distribution that each landless family should receive land in the following manner:

- (a) one acre Kabar Land,
- (b) two acres Rankar Land.

Thus 120 acres (40×3) of land was distributed among the landless of the village and the balance, i.e., 80 acres was kept for Sarvodaya Mandal. It was later on decided for making their holdings better and economic units, that this land (80 acres) should also be distributed among the landless after keeping sixteen acres for the use of the Mandal. It brought their holdings to the size of 4.6 acres each. There are possibilities still of increasing the size of their holdings as the village possesses enough of fallow land which can be reclaimed and put to purposeful use. After Gramdan they have re-claimed 100 acres more of such land mainly through their collective effort.

(2) **The Agricultural Practices**

After the donation of the village, some important decisions were taken concerning the use of land and its management. Shri Karan Bhai, who was specially deputed by Vinobaji for giving advice to the villagers, went there in April 1953. As an expert in village activities and constructive programmes, Karan Bhai studied the local conditions. The main problem before him was to decide the future pattern of cultivation to be adopted by the people. Which type of cultivation would suit them? There was held a discussion among the villagers relating to the adoption of collective, co-operative or individual farming. At last they came to the following conclusions:

- (i) All land belongs to the village as a whole but cultivation to the farmers.
- (ii) Agriculture and employment should be adopted on family basis.
- (iii) Farmers are free to adopt either of the two types of farmings: Collective or Individual.
- (iv) The Gram Sabha should renew the individual occupancy rights every year.
- (v) The land revenue shall not be paid to the government separately but collectively through the Sarvodaya Mandal.

To achieve these ends, the villagers pledged to work with full co-operation and sincerity. They adopted individual cultivation as well as collective. At present the individual type of cultivation is practised in the village. They also adopted sometime back a scheme of "co-operative and family cultivation", wherein about thirty families had joined after pooling their lands. The scheme lasted for full three years from 1953 to 1955 but could not succeed due to inherent defects in the planning of the scheme and its practice. Here one must not think that the people were not prepared to practise it any longer or that they found fault with the system but due to the lack of managerial and technical skill which these collective farms required, the villagers had to leave it and return to their individual farming.

The individual farming is carried on successfully in Mangroth. There are two main crops—Rabi and Kharif. From the point of view of production Rabi is very important. Wheat, gram and pulses are the main produce of this crop. Maize and Millet are produced during the rainy season from July to September.

The cultivation is commonly performed through animal driven ploughs as the land is uneven and the terrain makes mechanical farming difficult. The cultivators use chemical fertilizers for crop production. By their individual and collective efforts they have now brought 200 acres of land under Rabi crop for the production of wheat and gram which was formerly used only to produce Jowar and Bajra. There has been remarkable progress in the sphere of agricultural production. The village is heading towards self-sufficiency in the foodgrains. Before Gramdan there was scarcity of foodgrains as the village could meet the requirement of ten to eleven months only. The Table No. 13 gives a comparative idea of the increase in agricultural production since Gramdan.

- The Table No. 13 reveals an important fact that the production has gone up considerably since Gramdan. It is three times more than what the village was producing at the time

TABLE 13
Agricultural Production in Mangroth

<i>Production (in maunds)</i>		<i>Total</i>
<i>Kharif</i>	<i>Rabi</i>	
741	930	1671
967	1522	2489
1015	2366	3381
1510	2904	4414
1820	3110	4930
2019	1866	3885
2007	2604	4611
2400	2634	5034
1820	1614	3434
2100	1500	3600
1800	1448	3248
1600	1400	3000
1578	1300	2878
1415	2025	3440
1550	2142	3692
1268	2266	3534
2094	2523	4617

SOURCE : *Sarvodaya Mandal Records, Mangroth.*

of Gramdan. It also reached its peak in the year 1960-61. The years after 1960 do not show much increase, but rather a fall in production. Here we must note the fact that the agriculture of the village mainly depends on rains. The period beginning was the worst affected by drought. However, the main cause of the increase in production after 1953 has been the collective efforts of the villagers to construct a minor canal, crection of Bandhs, conserving the soil and adopting proper methods and techniques of cultivation.

(3) The Industrial Production

In Mangroth the chief industries started after the Gramdan are spinning, weaving and leather works. Apart from these, the people are engaged in the following cottage industries:

- (i) Oil milling.
- (ii) Carpet and Rope making.
- (iii) Pottery works.

(iv) Wood works.

(v) Fishing.

(vi) Dairy Farming.

(a) **Leather and Shoe-making Industry.** There are at present thirteen families which are engaged in leather dyeing and six families which prepare shoes. Apart from this, a full-fledged shoe-production department had been opened in June, 1967 with the aid of Gandhi-Smarak-Nidhi. In Mangroth an Ashram has been established which is mainly responsible for the industrial production and constructive activities of the village. The Ashram is running under the guidance of Shri Kashi Bhai who took his training in the work at Sevapuri Ashram, Varanasi.

The leather industry is the most popular of all the industries of Mangroth. There are certain geographical factors responsible for the establishment of this industry. The raw material for dyeing the leather is available from the jungles of the village. The leaves of "Dhau" tree are specially used for this purpose. Rearing cattle is the general practice adopted by the villagers and the skins of these animals are made available after their death. The persons engaged in the industry also collect skins from the nearby areas. This industry is divided under two separate heads: (i) Leather dyeing and (ii) Shoe making.

The method of tanning the skin is traditional. The skin is put inside the pucca earthen pit full of lime water. They leave the skin there for about a fortnight. Then they take out and again keep it in a tub filled with the mixture prepared from the babul-bark and dhau leaves for two or three days. The skin later on is cut into pieces and sewed into bags. The bags are filled with locally prepared colour and are kept hanging for at least 48 hours. The hanging bags are then turned upside and down, four times during the said period. Thus the leather is tanned.

The traditional shoes of Mangroth are very famous. They are long sized and are turned upwards at the toe. They have got a very good market at Rath and Orai. About six

families are engaged in making them. Each family prepares about twenty pairs of shoes in a month. Now with the opening of the shoe-production centre at Mangroth some experts from outside have been called to teach the persons the modern method of shoe-making. The production centre at present prepares more than 100 pairs of shoes per month. The Table No. 14 reveals the progress and monthly production of shoes.

(b) **Spinning and Weaving Industry.** The spinning and weaving is the second biggest industry of the village. About thirty men and women are fully engaged in the weaving work. Before Gramdan this industry was decaying fast due to non-availability of yarn with which the weavers used to weave. But after Gramdan a Khadi Centre for the training of the village people was opened under the Khadi development scheme of the Uttar Pradesh government. This has resulted in a good many persons turning into weavers and spinners. Now there is a spinner almost in every family.

The Sarvodaya Mandal is bestowing much care on this industry. Ambar Charkha training centre has also been opened and the Mandal is trying to organise the industry on collective lines. In the meantime, an arrangement has been made whereby the Sarvodaya Mandal buys the woven cloth from those who weave in excess of their needs and the same is given to the people who only spin and do not weave on extra charges. The Ashram which has been opened in the village maintains the accounts of sales and purchase of cloth and yarn and guides the productive activities of the village. The Table No. 15 indicates the Khadi production of the village;

(c) **Oil milling.** It is a very old industry of the village. The oil-seeds produced in the village are crushed in the "wooden rahtas" to take out oil. Four families are engaged in this work. Sarvodaya Mandal has arranged for a co-operative scheme of oil milling in the village. It has established a "Ghani" to increase the production of oil. The village is now not only sufficient in oil but exports its mustard oil to the neighbouring suburban markets.

(d) **Fishing in Betwa.** Fishing is also one of several activities of the village people. About twenty-five persons work as wholtime fishermen. Generally they work on contract. Sri Vir Pratap Singh, son of Diwan Shatrughan Singh, takes the contract every year and engages people in this activity.

Apart from this, there are several activities like dairy farming, pottery and wood works. One Kumhar family of the neighbouring village has settled down in Mangroth to supply earthen pots and similar other articles. In the village there are about 232 cows, 100 buffaloes and 680 goats which supply milk to the people.

(4) **The Village Self-Government**

After the declaration of Gramdan, the administrative body of Mangroth was constituted. On June 15, 1953, Vinoba sent an authority letter transferring the right of ownership of land and management to the Sarvodaya Mandal. He, therein, mentioned that all land henceforth be the property of Sarvodaya Mandal and the responsibility of its manage-

ment and planning would collectively be of the people. He also requested them to frame a constitution for their village organisation in accordance with the ideals of Sarvodaya.

Thus the constitution of Sarvodaya Mandal was prepared. Mangroth was registered in the name of Sarvodaya Mandal under the Societies Registration Act of 1860. The following are the main features of the constitution:

(a) **Aims and Objectives.** The main objective of this Mandal is to establish the village self-government in Mangroth by means of Gramdan, which will be based on equality and self-dependence. The social organisation brought about by this Mandal shall ensure that there would be no exploitation of any sort and every man and woman, leading the life of a real worker, shall be provided with full opportunity to develop his or her individuality and economic life.

To fulfil the above objective the Mandal will organise land and agriculture of the village; will collect and spend wealth on behalf of its members; will possess and own movable and immovable property and preserve the right of its sale and transfer, etc.

(b) **Membership.** Every villager after twenty years of age shall be the member of the Sarvodaya Mandal. The outsider can also become a member if he wishes to settle down at the village and satisfies the Mandal with his conduct. The new bride from the day she comes to the village shall automatically be the member of the Mandal.

(c) **Working Committee.** The working committee will consist of fifteen members. Five members shall retire annually by rotation and shall be replaced by election. The president will be selected unanimously. The working committee will select a secretary and joint-secretary every year.

(d) **Trustee Mandal.** It is a decorative unit of the Sarvodaya Mandal. It will consist of nine members—four life-long members and five selected by working committee. The trustee Mandal would see that Sarvodaya Mandal is carrying on its work properly. The following are its life-members:

(i) Diwan Shatrughan Singh.

(ii) Shri Shiva Dayal Mukhia.

(iii) Shri Indra Pal Singh.

(iv) Shri Babu Ram Agrawal.

(e) **Powers and Duties of the Working Committee.** The working committee is free to frame its bye-laws. Any substantial difference of opinion will be settled by three-fourths majority, otherwise all matters will be settled unanimously. It will meet at least once a month and carry out the resolutions passed therein. It will have all the executive powers concerning land management and the planning. The working committee shall be responsible to the Sarvodaya Mandal.

With such a pattern of village government, Mangroth is quite efficiently carrying on its activities of rural development and planning. What people see in this village and what distinguishes it from others, is the co-operative spirit with which the villagers work and stand for a common cause. The Gramdan, apart from improving their economic condition, has brought a new awakening among the villagers and has made them conscious of their rights and responsibilities.

(5) **The Future Plan**

Mangroth thus is one of those Gramdan villages which is developing on the lines of Sarvodaya planning. The formation of Sarvodaya Mandal, the establishment of the production-centre and the growing agricultural and industrial activities, make it clear that the Bhoodan-Gramdan movement has great potentialities. It is capable of generating confidence among the people and making them powerful. The non-violent approach of Vinoba is highly effective and useful.

Mangroth has many problems too. The greatest of all is the lack of water supply—specially drinking water. Being situated on a plateau, the level of water in the village is very low. It is below 120 feet. To fetch the water from the well is a high tough job. Though after Gramdan two wells have been constructed, yet the supply of water is still scanty. The Sarvodaya Mandal is, however, trying its best to overcome this difficulty. It has been planned by the Man-

dal to get a pumping station constructed near Betwa and has approached the state government for help.

The soil erosion is yet another problem facing the village. In rainy season the soil erodes at a high speed. Both types of erosions, i.e., sheet and gully, are found in the village. It is due to this that most of the land has been cut deep and wide with difficult ravines surrounding the village. To protect the land, people make Bandhs and check the fast running water. On the request of the Mandal a Survey Team of the government has recently visited the area and studied the problem. It has suggested ways and means to protect the land from this menace. The villagers have now planned a project of constructing several Bandhs to protect the land from further

Betwa is known as the "river of sorrow" for Mangroth. It flows at a distance of three furlongs from the village. It surrounds the northern part of the village like a sea and cuts the land heavy and deep, thus making ravines by its swift and speedy current. The worst part of it is that the village is almost vertically situated at the height of 130 feet from the belt of the river with a steep gradient. The village animals sometimes fall down dead into the river quite unaware. The village people have spotted out the danger-spots and such places are specifically demarcated every year.

In spite of these difficulties and problems, the people of Mangroth have shown remarkable progress in the field of economic development and rural uplift. They have relinquished the age-old concept of ownership of land and established new socio-economic values. The non-violence has brought about a silent revolution in the village and transformed the whole rural life. The people there are living a happy life on co-operative basis. If this happy transformation is possible in Mangroth, it can certainly be so in all the other villages of our country. The concept of Bhoodan-Grandan is complete in itself and provides a non-violent solution to the socio-economic problems of the villages of India.

IX

Sampattidan—The Sublimation of Capitalism

1. SAMPATTIDAN: ITS MEANING AND INTERPRETATION

(1) **The Gandhian Theory of Trusteeship and Sampattidan**

The concept relating to Sampattidan or sacrifice of wealth corresponds, in every detail, to the theory of trusteeship of wealth as enunciated by Gandhiji and with his idea of a non-violent change in the material set-up of the society. If people want to bring about a revolutionary change in our country, there must be a definite recognition of the fact that the rich do not have any kind of superiority over the poor and that all the money which they possess belongs to the society as a whole. They should think themselves as the trustees of their wealth for the betterment of the poor, the lowliest and the lost. In Gandhiji's opinion a model landlord would reduce the burden borne by the frail and poor cultivators and treat them sympathetically and hopefully instead of despairingly.¹ He also held the view that the rich should live as trustees and should hold his possessions, material or other, as a trust for society and devote them to and use them for the benefit and good of the whole society. He should assist those persons of the society first whose need might be the greatest.

• This philosophical approach to trusteeship theory re-

1. M.K. Gandhi, *Sarvodaya*, ed. B. Kumarappa, p. 51.

mained mostly impracticable with Gandhiji, during his lifetime, because he had no definite programme for adopting it into actual life. People were, at large, uncertain about its efficacy and practicability. The question which they had long been asking was: Could Gandhiji's theory of trusteeship offer a practical method to accomplish an economic change? Gandhiji did not pause to answer that question. But Vinoba Bhave supplied an answer and through "wealth-gift-mission" demonstrated that such a method could be evolved. He came out with a brilliant extension of Gandhiji's trusteeship theory and named it as 'Sampattidan'. The cause of re-naming this programme as Sampattidan was explained by Vinoba himself. He once remarked:

Though Trusteeship is a modern concept, its meaning has been very often misunderstood. I, therefore, do not use the word Trusteeship.² Gandhiji was a lawyer and so he derived a legal term to name his programme. I do not have any attraction like this. My programme speaks the language of the Upanishads: 'After sacrifice, thou shall eat.' I, therefore, call this programme of sacrifice of wealth by the better name—Sampattidan.³

(2) **Sampattidan—Vinoba's Gospel of Wealth**

The above doctrine is derivative in character. Vinobaji went searching for it to the various scriptures of the past. A deep study of the scriptures not only prepared the necessary ground for his doctrine but also gave Vinoba the inspiration to launch his call for sacrificial money gifts.⁴

The religious thinking of the past bears an impact of the disparities of income and wealth in society. It stresses the role of man in the creation of unequal distribution of wealth and its attendant economic and social ills. It is man

2. Vinoba, quoted in, C.C. Bhandari, *Bhoodan Kya Aur Kyon*, p. 220.

3. It is interesting to study how closely the concepts embodied in the scriptures resemble and anticipate the Vinobian doctrine of wealth sacrifice.

himself who has created a sordid atmosphere of gross materialism based on selfishness, greed and acquisitiveness, thus supplanting the age-old spiritualism and things that went along with it like fellow-feeling and co-operation, discipline and social service. A doctrine, therefore, that seeks to activate the economic and social life of the village must wipe out the cold materialism that plagues society. It would have to allow an unrestricted flow of wealth from one strata of the society to another so that the society as a whole may benefit and eventually the gap between the rich and the poor comes to an end. This is precisely what the Vinobian doctrine of wealth sacrifice seeks to attempt.

Therefore, when Vinobaji calls upon everybody to contribute his or her share of wealth to Sampattidan he is simply following the dictates enjoined by various religions. Christianity embodies the view that we are debtors to society since the very day of our birth. Whatever comes to us, we hold that for God's use, for the service of human needs. Property carries no right that is not subject to this concept. To quote the Holy Bible:

"If you want to be perfect go and sell your property, give the money to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven."⁴

And the Biblical admonition is:

"I tell you again, it is easier for a camel to get through a needle's eye than for a rich man to get into the Realm of God."⁵

We also find the same concept in Hindu religion. The Bhagawad Gita recites:

"The virtuous, who partake of what is left after sacrifice, are absolved of all sins. Those sinful ones, who cook for the sake of nourishing their body alone, eat only sin."⁶

4. *New Testament*—St. Mathew-19, tr. James Moffatt, p. 31.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-24.

6. *Srimadbhagvad Gita*, III-13.

And:

“He who does not follow the wheel of creation thus set going in this world (i.e., does not perform his duties), sinful and sensual, he lives in vain.”

Sampattidan is an indispensable part of Vinobaji's movement. It is next to Gramdan. Its importance lies not on its being an easy source of wealth for developing the society but as a means to end the ownership of property and extra wealth. Thus Vinoba views this gospel of wealth as a means of making the capital efficient and active and restricting the accumulation of wealth in a few hands. Vinobaji with a richly endowed imagination, while asking for Sampattidan, appeals to the hearts of the people so that they may come out of their bondage of external possessions and obliterate fearsome disparities in the society of to-day. He, therefore, prays to God to inspire man's eternal will so that he may be fully prepared to sacrifice his wealth for the sake of society. He recites the following prayer of the Rig Veda:

“Even him who would not give, do thou, O glowing Pusham, urge to give. And make the niggard's soul grow soft.”⁸

Vinobaji has a great faith in the goodness of man. He believes that there is a light burning in the heart of every individual that cannot be extinguished and he holds that man is an enlightened being. The “essence” in man tells him to make gifts. Though it is true that circumstances sometimes make him forget his real self, his pristine self is always there and it reasserts itself. He should, therefore, disentangle himself from the evil influences step by step. He should train himself to obey the good conscience within himself. If he practises it day by day he would grow full confidence in himself and through self-sacrifice do good to all. Vinobaji, therefore, invokes the spirit of sacrifice in man for giving out a proper understanding and a successful implementation of his gospel of wealth which he calls as Sampattidan.

7. *Ibid.*, III-16.

8. Rig Veda, 6-53-3, tr. Ralph. T.H. Griffith, *Hymns of Rig Veda*, p. 623.

(3) **Sampattidan—A Non-violent Social Dynamics**

Sampattidan is an important part of Vinoba's Bhoodan movement. Its significance does not lie on its being an easy source out of which workers can be maintained but an altogether different concept through which certain changes can be brought about in the social sphere. Sampattidan involves an emphatic and clear concept of ending private ownership in all extra wealth as does Bhoodan in the case of land. As all land belongs to God, wealth in all forms also belongs to God or society. Thus Sampattidan is an integral aspect of the economics of Bhoodan. Its real force is visible in the five-fold purposes it seeks to achieve :

- (i) By Sampattidan rich persons win the love and confidence of the poor.
- (ii) Sampattidan makes both the rich and the poor shed off their possessiveness and regard all properties as God's or Society's.
- (iii) It establishes human values and adds to the dignity of labour.
- (iv) Sampattidan generates universal power of love—The Lok Shakti, and enables the people to rely on government less and less.
- (v) Sampattidan creates a new social order.

Thus it reveals that Sampattidan is based on the same philosophy as that of Bhoodan. Through Sampattidan a non-violent social and economic order can be easily created. If the lowest stream of the poor can come forward to shed their sense of possession and greed willingly and share a little with the society, then it is more or less certain that the rich will automatically change their ways and follow suit.

One must, at this place, make it clear to his mind that Sampattidan is not just a fund for maintaining workers. Vinobaji has said, on and again, in the course of his walking tours, that he did not want money. Of course, he was asking for a portion of wealth. How were the two to be reconciled then? The answer was that Vinobaji was not going to take it into his own hands; nor would he shoulder the res-

possibility of managing and spending it or keeping the accounts. Vinobaji has only decided that the money would remain with the donor himself, but he would use it as Vinobaji wanted him to do and annually render him the accounts.

II. SAMPATTIDAN—A NON-POSSESSING SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORDER

(1) **Meaning and Idea of Non-possession**

A non-possessioning economic order of the society is that in which people say of whatever they have or produce in fields or factories that it belongs to the community as a whole. Thus in this order people work for society and not for their narrow ends. They work in the society according to their capacity for the benefit of all and get in return for their services according to their needs. They dedicate all that they have to society and receive back from it their share as a "Prasad". Vinobaji speaks out this concept in the language of Ishavasya when he says:

"Whatever life there is on earth, God has caused it to be. Therefore, having offered everything in sacrifice in His name, thou mayest be pleased with whatever thou mayest receive. Have thou then no desire in thy heart for wealth in whosoever's possession it may be."

(2) **The Ideal of Asteya and Aparigraha**

In the economic sphere a non-violent revolution is possible only through Asteya and Aparigraha (Bread Labour and non-possession). The philosophy of Sampattidan, therefore, is based on the same old idea of non-possession and productive labour. Explaining it, Vinobaji once remarked:

"The adoption of these two concepts of Asteya and Aparigraha leads to the creation of an atmosphere of economic purity. Without this, it is inconceivable to establish the rule of dharma in the life of"

either individual or society. The economic aspect is an important one in human life and it would not be proper to ignore the study of man in relation to wealth. Even Manu could not escape this sight and said:

“The life of man is pure if he has economic purity.”¹⁰

Asteya outlines the method of earning money and should not mean that non-possession will impoverish them. It means that people must earn through bodily labour and the latter—an ideal of possession through dedication. It may be emphasized here that this is not the ideal of “Sanyasis” but is an order which must be adopted by the society as a whole. It is wrong to believe that the common mass of the people cannot do without possession. It is the spirit of possession that encourages people to accumulate heaps of money with them. At present greed and acquisitiveness are the order of the day, the ruling principle of the mundane life. Worse still, people have given a legal frame-work around it. They consider stealing to be a crime but connive at those who encourage this anti-social activity by amassing heaps of money. Actually, the man who accumulates and makes the money “black” or keeps it in lockers and hinders the economic growth is the main culprit. The miser is the father of thief. People condemn the thieves to rot in the prison, but let their creators roam about in complete freedom. They even occupy seats of honour and respectability in society. Is this justice?

For achieving social justice Vinoba Bhave puts forward the idea of Sampattidan which holds that property belongs to all and not to any particular individual or group. All that people have, their land, their wealth, even their intelligence, everything has to be an offering to society. They should not fear that non-possession will impoverish them. After all, Vinobaji is not distributing poverty. On the other hand, he is enriching them as members of a common community and not as individuals with separate interests. Thus,

10. Bhandari, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

“यः अर्थक्षुचिः स क्षुचिः”

on the basis of non-possession, Vinobaji and his followers are building up a grand and beautiful society.

(3) **Idea of World-as-one-Family**

It is on this basis that Vinobaji wants to create a society with a cosmopolitan spirit. Virtually the concept of World-as-one-family (Vasudhav Kutumbkam) was given by our ancient sages but its actual shape was not outlined. They could not convert it into practicable philosophy. Hence the accumulation of wealth found a place in society and gave rise to income disparities. But if people begin to regard the whole world as one family and take to non-collection and productive labour, these disparities will die out, exploitation will disappear and all would be happy. The condition at present is that the poor are more unhappy and the rich are no less miserable. Both are living a distrustful and disappointing life. The entire society is separated into watertight compartments and man knows no peace. A progressive adherence to the philosophy of Sampattidan and non-possession is the only way which can unite the hearts and enable the people to live like brothers of one family.

(4) **Every Home to be a Bank**

When people live in this manner and always be prepared to offer their all to the society, they will help in building up an ever growing and dynamic economic order. Vinobaji says that living on these lines will turn every Indian house into a bank from which society can draw freely for all its wants. The need of the hour is to mobilize all the wealth in every form and press it into the service of society. By Sampattidan the offering will be used locally and thus it promises to be fairly smooth and workable plan. Sampattidan, therefore, carries great potentialities for changing the economic and financial structure of the modern society. In the present set-up we find various ways of exploitation, manipulation and creating monopolies which manifest their activities in different spheres like banking, insurance and industry. Public money is wasted and remains clogged in the dirty drains of economic hierarchy. Money as a social blood

ought to circulate smoothly through the veins and arteries of the society's body-politic. Sampattidan, therefore, clears the way and enriches the society by mobilizing the resources and creating an atmosphere of piety, tolerance, service and sacrifice for the poor. Money becomes a good servant and ceases to be a bad master. The profit motive is eliminated and man occupies position much more elevated than he did before under the old order and feels the responsibility of acting according to the social needs.

(5) Transformation of Individual Virtues into Social Forces

The individual virtues, when applied as a social force, have always produced a profound influence on the progress of society. There was a time in India when stealing was totally absent because it was regarded as a sin. Non-stealing is ever since an honoured code of society. Vinobaji, therefore, says that like stealing, the evil habit of having wealth in excess or more and of accumulating wealth should also be regarded as sin. Thus he, through the medium of Sampattidan and allied Yajnas, wants to inculcate the idea that possession of private property is as sinful as stealing. Let, therefore, people remember that this individual virtue of non-stealing can be converted into a social force for bringing up a non-possessing socio-economic order in the community as a whole.

III. EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH THROUGH SAMPATTIDAN

There is, in the present society, a disturbed economic equilibrium. An unjust distribution of wealth is the most wide-spread malady. It is one of the primary causes of extreme inequality of opportunities for the people in their economic life. Everywhere, therefore, people of all shades of thought are agreed that the first step for the reform of the existing social order is to re-distribute income. Gandhiji went a step further. Economic equality, he held, was the master key to non-violent independence. Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It also means the levelling down of the few in whose hand is concentrated the whole bulk of the

nation's wealth on the one hand and raising the life of the semi-starved and naked millions on the other. So long as the gulf between the rich and the hungry millions remains as wide as ever, a non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility. Gandhiji, therefore, declared that a violent and bloody revolution was a certainty one day, unless there was a voluntary abdication of riches and of the power given by riches, and a sharing of them for the common good.

Gandhiji's words of warning made Vinobaji almost restless. It was a warning that if the people did not succeed in resolving the way out without delay, it was bound to end in disaster. It was against this back-ground that Vinobaji started the Sampattidan movement. Vinobaji's Sampattidan is a call and also a warning to the owners of property to divest themselves of the share that belongs to others. He wants it to be done now and here. He says that through Sampattidan an equitable distribution of wealth becomes feasible. By equal distribution Vinobaji means that each man should have the where-withal to supply and needs and no more. The needs of different people may, however, vary. Therefore, these differences should be taken into consideration. This type of equality in the entire social order has to be recast. It might not be achieved at once but the aim should always be kept in mind and this can be done through Sampattidan.

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF LABOUR AND SAMPATTIDAN

(1) **The Pseudo-Science and Money**

People have attached greater importance to the false value of wealth and tended to ignore the living wealth—the men themselves. What is more, an inhuman cognizance has been given to them by calling them as “hands”. An employer of a factory regards his labour-force as “hands” because labourers are subordinate to his money and mind. It is often asked, how many hands are there in an industry? This attitude reflects as if labourers were mindless and soulless machines. Is it not a pitiable recognition?

Thus it is through Sampattidan that people can abolish this false value given to wealth. From this point the importance and significance of Sampattidan is very great. Most of the people think that Sampattidan is meant for those who own enormous wealth and that the poor have nothing to do with it. Far from it, on the other hand, it is a scheme for bringing about an overall change in the assumptions of pseudo science and money economy which supersedes the real value of labour. On the contrary, labour should be recognised as real wealth. Thus people have attached undue importance to wealth thereby subordinating or subjugating their own importance and human dignity. Hence the first step would seem to be to make wealth in the modern science entirely valueless. Further, as Vinoba holds a re-distribution of wealth under the existing circumstances would not be of much use.

(2) **Labour—The Currency of Exchange**

Vinobaji is of the opinion that people should not be attracted to the lures of money and money alone. The real and living money is labour. Without labour the printed currency notes of the Nasik Press would be useless heaps of papers signifying nothing. It is labour that attaches importance to it. Vinobaji, therefore, wants to change the whole set-up by Sampattidan. It is not that he is talking of "Vedanta" but his is the simple truth which already exists in the modern economic thought. The only thing is that people have forgotten their importance as the most active factor of production and subordinated themselves to the pressure and dominance of money economy.

(3) **Gift of Labour—The Real Sampattidan**

To bring about this new value in action, Vinobaji expounds different form of Sampattidan. The real form of Sampattidan is Shramdan. Labour alone is wealth. People, therefore, can call Shramdan as Sampattidan. What Vinobaji has received in Sampattidan in Koraput district in Orissa is both Shramdan and Sampattidan. If the donors donate their produce of twelve days in a year, it means that they

will donate to the society their labour of twelve days every year. To donate the produce of one's labour is the true and pure Dan, i.e., the gift or donation. According to Vinobaji this Dan of the wealth produced by physical labour is divine or "Daivi Sampattidan".

Thus offering of wealth produced by one's physical labour has an importance of its own. Vinobaji attempts to convince people that if they produce most of the requirements of their life by dint of their own labour, there would not be any need of wealth as we find it today. This is how people can make all the accumulated wealth useless.

V. OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY IN SAMPATTIDAN

(1) **Commerce as a Religion**

Vinobaji offers opportunity to the business community by introducing a parallel movement in the shape of Sampattidan. The great sacrifice by renouncing the possession of land started with Bhoodan. Vinobaji then extended its scope and included the "gift of wealth" in his ever expanding Bhoodan mission. In our society men of commerce are called "vaisyas" who adopt commerce as "Dharma". The Vinobian concept simply means that commercial dealings in the society must be without the desire of personal gain or profit. Our scriptures say that commerce is a religion even as agriculture is. When the people are in distress we must not indulge in economic malpractices and profiteering. While the Gita labels business as religion, it means selflessness, sacrifice and integrity. Today people lack the concept of true business. They have been converted simply into "brokers". It is sin in the name of true trades-man-ship. Business community must, therefore, realise the part they are to play in developing the nation materially as well as spiritually. True dharma never ignores the soul force in a man. It rather creates an atmosphere of love and sacrifice.

(2) **The Basis of Love and Compassion**

"Daya-Bhav" or Compassion is the most significant vir-

ture latently inherent in our society. The social groups are formed on the basis of love, Daya and Ahimsa. Vaisyas have experimented much with Ahimsa and their living was mostly influenced by the teachings of "Jainism" which created a special cult among them. When so much of compassion is present in this community, should not people find out the ways of utilizing that for national good? Sampattidan offers greater opportunity in this respect. It is said God is full of compassion. A Vaishnav every time thinks of and remembers this attribute of God. Gandhi, a true Vaishnav, always reminded us of this great virtue.¹¹ He never deviated from his Dharma as a Vaishnav though he was as pious as a Brahmin, daring like a Kshatriya and steadfastly serving like Shudra.¹² In fact mercy (Daya), forgiveness (Kshama) and love (Karuna) are the virtues that are universally cherished by the people. The Sampattidan Yajna is the extension of the same "Bhavna" in the field of business and commerce.

(3) The Ideal of Service and Sacrifice

To the business community the Sampattidan does not merely mean sharing of monetary possessions; it has wider connotation. By creating universal law or Lok-Niti, Sampattidan fulfils spiritual destiny of man by ultimately making the society affluent through his compassionate service and sacrifice. Man serves society in two ways. Service through the government under compulsion and the service through compassion and love—a voluntary and heart-felt service. It is called Lok-Niti or Jan-Shakti—the service which is self-born. It purifies the heart and uplifts man towards his spiritual destiny. This service is called Dharma. To sacrifice for the cause of the family, the society or the nation at large is the duty of every individual. Sampattidan, therefore, is a form of duty which is totally different from the tax-paying or co-operating with government under compulsion. It is a sort of willing sacrifice which a man

11. वैष्णवजन तो तेने कहिए जे पीर पराई जागो रे ।

12. Vinoba, *Sampattidan*, p. 26.

does for a new member of the family. Once Vinobaji was asked by a businessman, "There is already income-tax which we have to pay to the government. Now here is another tax which you ask us to pay." To this Vinoba's rejoinder was, "If your son is a tax upon you, well, Vinoba too is a tax. I simply mean to share a part of your food with me ... If you are four, I am the fifth; if five I am the sixth."¹³ Sampattidan, therefore, is the service which people render unto themselves—a sacrifice which is done by the people for the people. It is a sort of investment in man himself. It enriches the society by creating economic affluence and makes the people pure, compassionate and sacrificing in nature.

VI. METHODS AND WAYS OF SAMPATTIDAN

(1) One-sixth of Income

For establishing an economic order on the basis of Sampattidan the first step in that direction¹⁴ is that each individual should donate a portion of his income. If that is not possible for any reason, at least a portion of his family expenditure should be given in Sampattidan for the benefit of the society. Sampattidan should be regarded as a share given to new member of the family. In the beginning Vinobaji had asked to offer one-sixth of the income or one-fifth of total expenditure. But later on after considering many difficulties, the plan was revised and different shares were declared in accordance with different income groups. At the seventh annual session of Sarvodaya Samaj, at Puri, a decision in this regard was taken that for a monthly income below Rs. fifty the share should be 1/64th of a rupee; the income from Rs. fifty to Rs. 150 it is 1/32nd of a rupee and for income from rupees 150 to 250 it is 1/20th of a rupee. Similarly for every 100 rupee 1/64th part of a rupee should be increased up to a maximum one-sixth of income.¹⁵ It should be noticed that Sampattidan was not confined to rich persons alone. The poor were also expected to offer their contributions to Sampattidan as a token of

13. S. Ram, "An Interview with Vinoba", quoted in *Vinoba Sampattidan*, p. 12.

14. *Bhoodan Yajna*, II-2 (14-10-55), p. 6.

their love and sacrifice. However, the contributions differ with the income which must be "the present income" of the persons. What Vinobaji wants through Sampattidan is to train individuals to consider that all wealth belongs to society and that they are the trustees of their possessions.

(2) Ways of Spending Sampattidan

The amount of Sampattidan is not to be given to anybody. The donor himself will have to spend it. He will only submit accounts annually to the Sarva Seva Sangh. Vinobaji has laid down the following ways through which Sampattidan can be spent.

"(i) Landless peasants who have been given land can be provided with seeds, bullocks, etc., and can be helped in preparing the land obtained in Bhoodan for cultivation.

(ii) Maintenance of gram sevaks of Bhoodan.

(iii) Propagation of Sarvodaya literature."¹⁵

It was, however, suggested that the Sarva Seva Sangh or Vinobaji could make further additions to the above. But commonly it was up to the donor to finalise the purpose and method of spending Sampattidan. Though it could be utilized for any social service of the donor's choice yet Vinobaji wanted that only one-third of it should be spent on such services and the rest be utilised according to the above-mentioned plan. Vinobaji also suggests to donors wishing to utilize their Sampattidan to help the landless peasants who are provided with the Bhoodan land, not to give it in the form of cash, but should themselves buy bullocks, plough, seeds and other equipments or sink a well for them. They can take the help of Bhoodan workers and Shanti Sainiks.

(3) Some other forms of Sampattidan

In addition to the above ways of spending Sampattidan, there are many other forms of expenditure which, according to Vinobaji, come within the Sampattidan. These are:

15, Vinoba, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

- (a) If a Harijan child is brought up in the family other than his own, the expenditure on the child will be considered as Sampattidan.
- (b) If the members of different income groups pool all their income and divide the total with the share according to the need or number of members in a family, such common pooling will be known as Sampattidan.
- (c) As a rule, those who donate less than rupees 12 annually are allowed to spend the money in any way they like on public benefit. But those donors whose share comes to rupees 25 are to spend on constructive programmes like Khadi and Village industries, etc. But persons donating more than Rs. 25 could spend only a part of it on such programmes as village industries, wages for hand grinding flour, subscription to Bhoodan-literature and "Swadhyaya Mandals" and the remaining would be utilized for maintaining landless labourers and Bhoodan workers.

VII. THE TWIN PROGRAMME OF BHOODAN AND SAMPATTIDAN—A CHALLENGE TO LAISSEZ-FAIRE ECONOMY

The theory of absolute spontaneity and benevolence in the economic order and mechanism of its constant balancing, as held by Adam Smith was, later on, greatly criticised by his followers. Even during his own life-time there were unceasing attempts to attack his basic theories and his conclusions were held impracticable and far from truth.

The disturbed economic equilibrium in the field of production and the worst of its type in the field of distribution, clearly indicate how vague and unjust are the judgements of the Master.¹⁶ Vinobaji attacks this policy and shows how social inequality necessitates the submission of the weak to the will of the strong. A brilliant German economist, Her-

mann, declares his inability to subscribe to the doctrine laid down by Smith and his followers, namely, that self-interest is a pivot around which the whole national economy revolves. Within the bounds of this national economy, he thinks there ought to be room for what he calls the civic spirit (Geneinsinn). Vinobaji here aptly conforms to the same idea when he says that Lok-Shakti (Civil Power) or collective strength, if properly yoked, can tackle the most herculean task and make the world a much better place to live in. Leaving self-interest aside, if people contribute something to society through Sampattidan, then this non-possession will become a force for social good. Vinobaji, therefore, opposes self-interest as a fundamental guiding base for the spontaneous adaptation of the equilibrium of demand and supply. Vinobaji sees a persistent clash of interest between the economic overlords and depressed and down-trodden labourers. This keeps the world equilibrium disturbed. At one time it assumes the shape of a war—a hot war and at others a passive state of peace—a cold war. But real peace is always a mirage.

Thus Vinobaji's Sampattidan movement meets the challenge of the laissez-faire economy. It is a sublimation of capitalism. The modern capitalistic economy thrives on market and the principle of earning more profits and ignores the woes and sorrows of the people. Vinobaji suggests two ways for solving this problem. Firstly, people should raise the village structure on the basis of decentralized and self-sufficient economy and secondly, rich people and big businessmen should contribute their share of income in Sampattidan Yajna. They should do physical labour, treat themselves as trustees of their wealth and share it equally with one and all. In this way, in Sampattidan scheme, capital is not allowed to occupy a more elevated position than it deserves and so exploitation is reduced to a minimum.

PART THREE

The Critical Estimate

X

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Misgivings About the Bhoodan Movement



The Bhoodan movement has been subjected to a lot of criticism by leading economists of the country and philosophers, political thinkers and social reformers all alike. Even some of the disciples of Mahatma Gandhi have come forward with their vote of dissent on this important issue. The philosophy behind the movement and the results of its working have come for sharp criticism from various quarters. It will, therefore, be desirable to assess this criticism for whatever it is worth and to examine its validity.¹

I. THE ABSENCE OF CLARITY

A line of argument against Bhoodan is the supposed absence of clarity regarding the objectives of the movement. It is said that although a lot of things are claimed about the potentialities of the Bhoodan movement regarding the creation of a stateless society through a non-violent social revolution, no one apparently seems to know how far is the movement going to really benefit the people. To bring in Gandhi's name and to claim that the movement is born of the Gandhian idea of a thorough social awakening is one thing but to visualize concretely the objectives of the movement is quite another.

The protagonists of the movement, on the other hand, have said that the Bhoodan aims at the greatest good of all.

1. See B.T. Ranadive, *Sarvodaya and Communism*, pp. 4-11; also B. Bhardwaj, "Bhoodan: Vinoba's Unfulfilled Dream", *Hindustan Times*, 25-1-68.

As it is based on the Gandhian ideals of non-violent social revolution, i.e., on love and innate goodness of man, its aim is the welfare of the common man specially the down-trodden and the proletariat. In the context of the colossal poverty of the Indian agrarian population, any scheme for the well-being of the people, howsoever slight its contribution, should be welcome.

II. THE LOP-SIDEDNESS

One of the major drawbacks of the movement is said to lie in its lop-sided approach to the agrarian problem. Bhoodan aims to help and provide land only to the landless villagers. It leaves out the semi-landless or those villagers who possess some land but still work as cultivating labourers and depend wholly or partly on wages. If the movement confines only to the landless labourers and neglects the bulk of the rural population having tiny plots of land, nothing very remarkable the movement is going to achieve.

According to Vinoba, however, the problem of the landless labourers is rather baffling and urgent. First thing, first and hence the Bhoodan movement stands for the landless. But this is not all. There should be no landless in the village is the first step of Vinoba and his last is that there would remain no land owner. The movement, therefore, should not be taken merely as a mercy mission for the landless. In fact, it has now been developed into Gramdan where all the persons co-operate for the common cause and the distinctions like the landless and the land owner are wiped out.

III. THE INSUFFICIENT LAND

It is argued that the movement provides insufficient land to the landless. This shall neither be able to provide him with employment for whole of the year nor will be able to raise his income level to an appreciable extent. It is further argued that the movement within a short period would mean a fall in the acreage under cultivation (as transfer of land takes some time to be finalised) and thereby worsen the already bad situation of food production in the country.

But this contention is based on the plausible assumption that cultivable land received in donation, if not distributed immediately among the landless labourers, remains idle for some time. This is not true. The land received in gifts continues to be cultivated by the donors until it has been redistributed and legal formalities are completed. As to the "insufficient land" given to the landless, it can easily be said that provision of five acres of land is not a bad one when about 62 per cent of the holdings in India are below five acres of land.

IV. FRAGMENTATION AND SUB-DIVISION

Another ground on which the Bhoodan movement and its working are criticized is that it leads to the division and fragmentation of already small and scattered fields. As it happens, the land gifts from every type of owner—big or small—are accepted. The donations by small farmers of little pieces of land out of their miniature holdings tend to accelerate the sub-division and fragmentation of land. The economic disadvantages of this unhealthy trend are too well-known to be emphasised.

On behalf of the movement, it is claimed that the land donations from small land owners are accepted in order to create the right type of atmosphere for converting the big land owners. Vinobaji has said, "I am more worried about the fragmentation of human hearts than the fragmentation of land...Fragmented land can be easily consolidated later with mutual goodwill and co-operation; but fragmentation of hearts owing to the social and economic inequalities is full of dangerous possibilities in a state like India."²

Admittedly, this argument may not appeal to a professional economist. But the fact is that before distribution an attempt is made to consolidate small plots of donated land as far as possible. As regards the sub-division of land it may be pointed out that in the majority of cases only those lands have been donated which formed complete units by them-

selves. Bhoodan thus has not entailed any further fragmentation of holdings; only already divided and small pieces of land have come to its fold. No land has been further divided merely for the sake of donation in Bhoodan movement.

V. THE UNECONOMIC HOLDINGS

Another contention of the critics has been that Bhoodan creates uneconomic holdings. As poor persons join the movement by donating a small piece of land from their already tiny plots, the holdings are reduced to uneconomic units.

In answer to this, it is necessary to look upon the size of holdings of cultivable land per family in India. As has been stated earlier about 20 per cent of holdings (in the country) are of below an acre, contributing to only a little over 1 per cent of total area operated and about 40 per cent holdings are below 2.50 acres, contributing to only 6.71 per cent of the total area operated. More than 74 per cent of the agricultural holdings are below 7.50 acres comprising of 29.76 per cent of the total area operated.¹ The inescapable fact here to note is that 62 per cent of the land holdings are below five acres of land. The average size of land holding in India is only 6.63 acres of land.

In view of the above facts it must be admitted that holdings of five acres of land which Bhoodan provides is certainly an improvement over the existing situation. Moreover, the concept of "economic holding" is quite relative. In Japan the average holding is of 2.5 acres and yet her average produce from land is three times that of India. A small holding does not necessarily show a fall in production or become an uneconomic unit. The intensive cultivation practices with the help of better manures, seeds and irrigation facilities can turn even a small plot of land of 2.5 acres into an economic unit. The Japanese method of intensive cultivation can be practised by the peasants and given this land

¹ 3. *The N.S.S. Report* 16th Round, No. 113, pp. 13 and 21 (figures consolidated).

of five acres each in Bhoodan, they can quite sufficiently maintain a tolerable standard of living.

VI. LAND UNFIT FOR CULTIVATION

Mira Behn, an old disciple of Gandhiji, feels that most of the land donated is of inferior quality and some of it is extremely poor. She thinks that over 80 per cent of the collected land is of inferior character.⁴ It is also said that quite a good percentage of land received under Bhoodan is either grazing land or covered with forests. The critics further add that Vinoba himself seems to be aware of this fact but he has tried to evade the question by saying that to his mind no land can be called useless and that he can make the best possible use even of the rocky tracts and the hills.

However, the estimates of Mira Behn regarding the quality of land are quite incorrect and based on false assumptions and misgivings. Like Mira Behn, most of the people think that a high percentage of land collected in Bhoodan is unfit for cultivation. As up to 1957 no such statistics was collected regarding the quality of land received in Bhoodan, the critics were forwarding their own estimates of bad lands ranging from 60 to 80 per cent. But this is not true. The fact is that out of the total land of 42,27,476 acres collected up to about 14,84,830 acres of land has been found unfit for cultivation. The estimate, therefore, comes to about 35.8 per cent.⁵ As up to 31st March, only 42,64,096 acres of land has been collected, the approximate percentage of such bad land can safely be said as 35 only.

Secondly, in this connection it may be well to point out that the gifted land has been divided into three groups. One—land under cultivation by tenants; two—land which is cultivated by the donor himself; three—cultivable land but not under cultivation. In the first case big tenants or land owners are requested to donate their tenancy rights and small cultivators are made full owners. In the second case,

4. "Reply to Critics", *Hindustan Times* (4-6-53).

5. *Survodaya*, Cover page 480.

the land goes directly to the landless peasants. In the last case, the donor is requested to donate it after breaking it with plough or otherwise, i.e., after making it fit for cultivation. In case he is unable to do so the land will have to be broken with the help of government or money donations or the free-labour volunteers. In no case the poor donee are expected to meet the cost of reclamation or such other charges in making the land fit for cultivation. In fact, donors themselves are asked to bear such expenses.

Besides, the psychological effects of the Bhoodan movement should not be undermined. When a landlord donates land, no matter of what quality it is, it certainly reflects some sacrifice for the landless and an acceptance of the idea behind the movement. Through his act of land donation a change is apt to be affected in his psychology. This seed of thought sown in his heart is bound to bear fruit some day. And there are many possibilities of his donating more of his land in future. So land of whatever quality it is, is not to be refused though one may well say to the donor that this was a bad gift. Bad land can be and has to be reclaimed and put to its best possible uses.

VII. THE QUESTION OF REHABILITATION

The argument against Bhoodan is that it will hardly be successful in rehabilitating all the landless agricultural labourers. Land donations are not like donations of money or food-grains to be immediately made use of. On immediate acquisition, land is more of a liability than an asset until it can be made productive with the help of necessary inputs and management. Thus providing land to the landless will not rehabilitate them unless they are also provided with all the resources or inputs and implements for agriculture. On the other hand, such a change of ownership of land in favour of the landless will cause unjustifiable loss of production and dislocation of agriculture without really benefiting anybody.

That is why the Vinobians say for providing implements and other facilities to the landless of the village. Vinoba has

started a number of other Yajnas such as Sadhandan (Haldan, Baildan, Koopdan), Sampattidan, Shramdan, etc. It is interesting here to note the objectives and methods of Sampattidan which in general combines all the allied Yajnas of the Bhoodan movement. Vinoba himself admits that only Bhoodan or Gramdan cannot bring about any change in the economic life of the people unless their other possessions, like labour, capital and the ability are shared by all for the good of the society as a whole.

VIII. WHY LAND TO THE LANDLESS?

The slogan "Land to the Landless" seems to emphasize the "indispensable" character of land for those who do not have it. But the ideology of Bhoodan by no means can be justified that land is as indispensable as air, water and Sun. By no stretch of imagination it can be compared with these objects. Sardar Lal Singh, in his minute of dissent on the land ceiling, has compared land with a factory or a textile mill and argued that it is made to yield "maximum production" and should be handled by those who are efficient and not necessarily by the landless.⁶ The need of the country is not the equal distribution of land but the higher productivity and efficiency of land, labour and capital.

The approach of Bhoodan is quite different. Land is as free a gift of nature as air, water and Sun. It is, therefore, nobody's property. Vinoba says that if we want to rejuvenate the rural economy, the old values must change. The re-distribution of land would significantly enhance the social status and the economic power of the landless. What's use of higher production, if the distribution pattern remains defective and the big land owners still act as the dominating force in the village economy? Land being limited must not be owned by anybody is the main idea behind the Bhoodan movement. But as a first step it calls for a voluntary surrender of at least one-sixth part of one's holdings for the benefit of the landless of the country. Vinoba's next demand

6. Sardar Lal Singh's Minute of dissent, *The Panel of Land Reforms* (1958), p. 115.

is the total abolition of private property in the shape of Gramdan. Vinoba has deeply studied the rural problem and found that it is not simply the problem of increasing production, but it is a great problem of transformation of human values and establishing a new economic order. The Bhoodan movement seeks to bring about a change of this type on the basis of its ideology stated above.

IX. AGAINST MECHANIZED FARMING

It is said that Bhoodan stands in the way of mechanized farming. The small five-acre holdings that the Bhoodan aims at providing to the landless of the country are unsuitable for mechanized farming which some critics hold as indispensable for increased agricultural production in view of the fast growing population. In addition, it is feared that the re-distribution of land will stand in the way of subsequent general reform of the land system.

On the other hand, it is hoped that the Bhoodan movement through the liquidation of vested interests and creation of socio-economic equality, would go a long way in furthering the cause of co-operative farming in India. Moreover, judging from the ultimate aim of the Bhoodan movement, namely, "the greatest good of all", there would be no objection, in principle, to make plots sufficiently large, if all the villagers agree and it does not infringe the basic principle of Sarvodaya. Similarly, though there is not much scope for mechanized farming in India, yet there is no objection to consider its use for increased aggregate efficiency if it does not in any way endanger the stability of the village economy.

Vinobaji has repeatedly said that the present distribution of land under Bhoodan movement will not stand in the way of general agrarian reforms. As it is, our laws of inheritance and transfer may well have to be amended suitably in order to prevent fragmentation and transfer of land into the hands of non-cultivators or giant cultivators or combines. A welfare feature of the land reforms is of the land ceiling act, but Vinobaji goes further and demands "Land Flooring" wherein all the landholders will shed off their

right of ownership and pool their lands for common use and benefit. But one should not think here that the cause of land reforms is hampered by the Bhoodan movement. It does not seek exemption for the donors and the donees from operation of any such law. In fact, the movement creates better understanding among the villagers for adopting the land reform measures as are announced by the government from time to time. But the fact cannot be brushed aside that the Bhoodan-Gramdan movement solves many a problem concerning land management and its organisation—more efficiently than what we see from the general land reforms.

X. THE LEGITIMATE OBJECTION

The only legitimate objection to the working of Bhoodan is that its machinery is not efficient and the distribution process is very slow. Up to 31st March, only 11,90,718 acres of land could be distributed. About 16 lakh acres of land has yet to be distributed. (The remaining 14 lakh acres of land is supposed to be unfit for cultivation).

But now much attention is being paid to the distribution work. The process of distribution has also been changed. Land gifts are accepted only when they are given to the landless persons. The work of collection and distribution thus goes on simultaneously. Efforts are being made to distribute the already collected land as soon as possible. It must also be remembered that by its very nature the distribution work is difficult. The workers have to face many problems before the actual distribution takes place. It is the question of finding out really deserving persons for the land which is to be distributed. It is obvious that energy should be directed towards this task. The distribution of land in Gramdan villages should also be accomplished at the earliest.

XI. TARGET NOT ACHIEVED

The target for land-gift was set at fifty million acres which was to be achieved by the end of 1957. It was too high an ambition for a voluntary movement depending almost entirely on moral persuasion. Up to the end of 1957

(and even up to this period) only 1/10th of the target fixed has been achieved.

One has to confess that the Bhoodan plan to achieve the land revolution by 1957 has failed. This is perhaps because many unrealistic and exaggerated claims were made on behalf of the movement. Maybe, also the movement relied rather too much on the goodness of human nature and the Godhead in man. But one must not forget here that now the attention of the movement has been diverted from Bhoodan to Gramdan. When the entire land of the village is donated, the question of Bhoodan is automatically solved. Judging from the Gramdan point of view the movement is a great success. Up to July 1958 about 1,68,058 entire villages have been donated to Vinobaji including 1,249 entire Blocks and 47 districts in whole of the country.

XII. COLLECTIVIZATION OR A MISGIVING?

It was claimed by the protagonists of Bhoodan that they were not enamoured of collectivization and they intended rather to give land to the millions of landless labourers in the country-side on an individual or family basis to begin with. Later on, of course, the idea was to welcome co-operative endeavour, not so much for the pooling of land as for the pooling of various agricultural operations. Subsequently, however, there was a significant shift from the earlier views. Collectivization demands abolition of the right of ownership in land. Under it land becomes the property of the state or the village and the peasant becomes a mere worker on land.

In Gram Swaraj of Vinoba's conception it is feared, the peasant, under a more or less collectivized system of land management, may become a pawn in the hands of the village community. The authority having control over in that case may not be far removed from him and may be more amenable to his desires and demands. But he loses his individuality, a large part of his freedom and becomes absorbed in that collective-order. His initiative is curbed with obvious consequences.

. It is contended on behalf of the Bhoodan movement that it is incorrect to suggest that there has been any shift in the Bhoodan thought. Bhoodan does not begin with any prior theory about individual or collective agriculture. It pools the land and then it gives some land to the dispossessed land-labourers and eventually brings about a re-distribution of land. Land is apportioned to individuals but the right of ownership ceases to be unconditional.

The most important unit in Bhoodan is the individual. He has to be wide awake and realise clearly that the joy of life and sense of achievement comes only when one offers with real goodwill, whatever one may have for the social good. Bhoodan wants the people to come together, to think together and work together for the common good of all. The people as a whole and not any small elite, or a group, or a party, should have the initiative. It is thus a revolutionary effort to create a Sarvodaya Society in which every individual has the sense of being the centre, and where all participate actively in the social process. It is an attempt on the part of the individual to become harmonious with the whole of which he is a part. It naturally wants to create a society in which every one will have a role and an importance in the measure in which they serve the well-being of all. So the bonds that will bring people together will neither be those of self-interest nor those of enforced collective-order of suppression and serfdom.

XI



Conclusions and Suggestions



The Bhoodan movement had its origin in the spirit of human compassion. The activating force which initiated this movement was the spirit of love and sacrifice found in every human being and by which many far-reaching changes could be brought about in the social and economic life of the people. It was with this spirit of compassion for the landless of the country that Vinoba started his land-gift-mission to solve the basic economic problems of rural poverty, hunger and landlessness.

The economic implications of a land system in which the tiller owns the land are well known. Land must belong to those who work on it. But an economy wherein the tiller is divorced from land and reduced to the status of a wage earner—"free" or "unfree"—cannot but lead to the creation of social and economic disparities. The system must, therefore, be changed. But how? By love, legislation or violence?

It is here that one finds Vinoba coming out with the light of love, truth and non-violence to dispel the penury from the humble dwellings of the landless—the lowliest and the lost. As a saint he showed the path of love; as a revolutionary he strived persistently to bring about changes in the social and economic life of the people; and as a genius he originated the concept of Bhoodan and Gramdan so that rural life might be organised on the lines of the sound economy of peace and permanence.

The Bhoodan movement has been a non-violent process

of socio-economic change. It has sought to transform the entire social order by means of love, fellow-feeling and sacrifice. The land problem, being the most baffling and urgent of all, has been the first target of the movement. But it forms only a part of that great revolution which Vinoba wants to bring about in society. The aim of Bhoodan is thus much higher than merely collecting and distributing land from one hand to another. It is an all-embracing revolution that seeks to bring about an overall transformation of human values and thus establishes a new order wherein the individual interest will exist only as part of the wider social interest. The economy of such a system, if it has to be baptised, would be communitarian—non-exploiting and co-operative. It is an upsurge of the people and by the people through the process of love for each other.

Judging simply from the point of view of land collections made under the Bhoodan movement, one may say that it has failed to achieve the proclaimed target of collecting fifty million acres of land. But one should not neglect the other side of it. The movement, so far, has distributed 11,90,718 acres of land among the landless. It is not an ordinary achievement for a movement which is based entirely on persuasion and love. Even the land ceiling Acts have not so far contributed this much amount of land for the landless. The need of the hour is thus a sound appreciation of the movement. It is high time the people of all shades of life came forward with their constructive suggestions for bringing about an improvement in the process and working of the movement.

The Bhoodan movement has been weak on the publicity front. It has been very silently getting ahead for the last twenty years without much propaganda at its command. There are not many journals and books on the subject. Adequate information is not available about the development work done on the Bhoodan lands and in the Gramdan villages. The common man does not know, as much as he should, about the achievements of the Bhoodan movement. Lack of facts and figures in detail regarding the development work done in this sphere makes it difficult to present

an overall assessment. Such information, in addition, can be helpful to the economists, planning bodies and the students of the movement. An honest appraisal of the functioning and the achievement of the movement would undoubtedly boost up the morale of the selfless Bhoodan workers in accelerating its pace.

Another fact which merits special mention is the dissolution of the Bhoodan Samities which were formerly established for giving practical shape to the movement, i.e., for collecting and distributing land. But on the basic assumption that Bhoodan is a mass movement and that people themselves should organise it, the Samities were dissolved. As a result perhaps, the Bhoodan movement—a people's movement—has not been able to catch the imagination of the masses as much as it was expected of it. The movement is creeping ahead on the shoulders of the same old Bhoodan workers who have now become the individual pushers. No significant additions of the new enthusiast Bhoodanis have been noticed. Thus it has rather been a hasty step which could have been suspended for sometime more even if it was deemed so necessary on the ground of principles.

The slow moving legislative machinery responsible to give a legal shape to the new economic set-up in the village envisaged by the Bhoodan movement should be geared up. Even the leaders of the movement have complained that the machinery has been moving at such a slow pace; that for years the farmers who had donated land were forced to pay the revenue for land given away by them because of the time consuming processes involved in making the transfer legal. This has led the donors taking back the land from tenants earlier given by them in the Bhoodan. Things do not stop here. The small size of holding distributed to the landless with improper and insufficient facilities for even an ordinary utilization has, in many cases, forced them to abandon the land so prizedly received in the Bhoodan movement.

Another factor which can contribute to a very large measure to the success of the movement is the help from the government. The government has many development

projects in hand. The ultimate aim of such projects and the Bhoodan movement is obviously the same—making the people happy and prosperous. The government, therefore, should co-ordinate its schemes with the working of the Bhoodan and the Gramdan movements. Besides, the implementation of the co-ordination programme should be expedited as early as possible. Then again, the path of the success of Gramdan can be paved well by the government. She needs to hasten the granting of a legal recognition of Gramdan easily and without complexities. In recent years, some States have passed Gramdan Acts to enable the people to organise their villages on the lines of Sarvodaya planning.

The need for money for the successful carrying out of the development plans is another sphere where the government can step in and promote the idea of the Gramdan by extending liberal financial help. Another way in which the government can help Gramdan movement is by providing the movement with persons capable of carrying out development activities. It can provide the needed trained technical personnel to carry out the projects. Obviously, Bhoodan by itself cannot create its own technical team. Here government aid is desirable for the successful implementation of the Bhoodan plans. But then the government should have no power to interfere with the working of the movement.

A few practical suggestions regarding the working of the Bhoodan movement may not be out of place here. These are:

- (i) No donation of land should ordinarily be accepted from those villagers who have holdings of less than five acres.
- (ii) Land which is known to be quite inferior should be avoided as far as possible.
- (iii) No uncultivable land received in donation should be brought under cultivation until an expert committee, specifically appointed for the purpose, has studied the site of the field. If, for instance, one group of villages has more than enough waste land nearby, some of it may be taken on condition

that an equal amount is given back to the other villages which have inadequate grazing land. As a matter of fact, no more waste land should be touched until an over-all policy has been decided upon in conjunction with the government. Then only equitable distribution of grazing lands would have to be worked out.

- (iv) The organizers of the movement should also provide necessary inputs and equipment to the landless peasants who rehabilitate themselves on the Bhoodan land.
- (v) Full and detailed records of the donations of land, livestock and material should be kept. The Sarva-Seva Sangh, as the central body, should see that the records are properly maintained.
- (vi) As stressed earlier, the government should be urged to take up the necessary legislation for just and equitable distribution or re-distribution of land, cattle and other material among the landless.

One may emphasize once again that the follow-up action should be closer and more thorough; and the consolidation and re-distribution of land received as gifts should be paid greater attention than it has hitherto been given. The impact of receiving a Gramdan if not properly followed up by organisation of villages on desired lines would be to make the villagers sceptical about the entire thing. It is for this reason that Vinobaji has introduced the concept of "Gram Sankalp". Gram Sankalp or the collective effort has to be kept up for the progress of the village as a whole. The Gramdan movement has now included in its working a new process of "Prachar", "Prapti" and "Pusti". This means propagation, acceptance and the confirmation of Gramdan in three regular stages.

Undoubtedly, the Bhoodan movement has been successful in bringing about some change in the people's attitude but other results of its working have not been very spectacular. The groundwork for a non-violent social revolution

may be said to have been laid, but the revolution itself seems still a long way off. It is certainly a modest beginning to inculcate an attitude of abandoning the property rights for common good. It is a prelude to the stupendous task which Sarvodaya has set for itself.

The remarkable success of the Bhoodan movement can be judged from the fact that it has now been developed into the Gramdan movement. Gramdan stands for donating the entire land of the village and thereby totally discarding the right of ownership in land. It implies the pooling and sharing of entire land of a village by all its inhabitants. It is here that one may find the fulfilment of the Bhoodan mission. With the origin of Gramdan the problem of Bhoodan, of course, comes to an end. The Gramdan combines in its fold all other Yajnas, namely, Bhoodan, Sampattidan, Shramdan, etc. The Gramdan movement would lead to a fuller development of co-operative life and effort in the villages and result in the economic betterment of the people and all-round progress and development of the villages in the country.

So far 1,68,058 villages have been donated to the movement. With the new concept of Sulabh Gramdan the movement has now been accelerated to a considerable extent. People now are showing greater interest in donating their land and joining Gramdan. This also reveals its popularity and the mass acceptance of the philosophy of Gramdan. The Gramdan movement has shown that the masses can generate a new sense of self-help and self-reliance among themselves by voluntary pooling their land and capital resources for the good of the community. Gramdan villages have their own administrative set-up. The Gram Sabha, which is the highest body in the village, prepares a production plan for the village as a whole on an equitable and scientific basis. It also looks after the landless labourers and ensures employment to the people. In Gramdan, the villagers also agree to donate a portion of their annual produce to the Gram Sabha for creating a nucleus of funds for setting up rural industries, milk schemes and other economic enterprises. The village communities

under Gramdan thus try to pool their limited resources and help the weaker sections through their own efforts without depending unduly on outside help or government. The type of life and the system which we find in Gramdan villages conform to the concept of "Gram Swaraj" as has been envisaged by Vinoba—the founder of the movement.

And still, much remains to be done in Gramdan villages. They suffer from the paucity of capital resources which the government should provide them liberally. The Community Development Programme can also be integrated with the development of the social and economic life of the people under Gramdan. The Gramdan movement should be suitably encouraged and strengthened to achieve a more rapid socio-economic progress of the Indian country-side and to help in establishing "Gram Swaraj" on more stable and broad-based foundations and thus ensure a good living to all the sections of population through self-help and co-operative effort. Undoubtedly, the Gramdan movement has immense potentialities which must now be utilised to the fullest advantage. It could revolutionize our village life through the forces of community action, self-sacrifice and mutual aid.

The concept of Sampattidan has the same philosophy behind it as that of Bhoodan. As a matter of fact Sampattidan and Bhoodan are two facets of the same coin. Bhoodan without Sampattidan cannot bear fruit and Sampattidan without Bhoodan will have no root. It is, therefore, very essential to organise this movement on sound lines. The ways and methods which are followed regarding Sampattidan appear rather naive and ineffective from the practical viewpoint. There is no compulsive share of contribution and no proper check upon it. Everything is left to the sweet will and honesty of the donor. From the point of view of the concrete results, it must be admitted that Sampattidan has not, so far, been very successful. But the movement is based on benign intentions and a consistent philosophy.

• For all its short-comings, the fact remains that the Bhoodan movement has certainly achieved much more than

what its critics were prepared to grant it at its start and what has been achieved by legislative processes like imposition of ceiling on land holdings and programmes for settlement of the landless on land owned by the government. Although the movement has not been able to involve all the progressive elements in the country and has not been able to enlist the support of the intelligentsia and all the serious thinking people, but the basic issue missed by the thinkers and the government is that the alternative to the method of Bhoodan is a violent revolution as witnessed earlier in Telangana and of late in Naxalbari. Are the people prepared for it?

APPENDIX A

A GRAMDAN PLANNING MODEL IN INPUT OUTPUT FRAMEWORK*

1. *The Problem*

The essential aim of planning for economic development is to increase per capita income. The aim may also be expressed in terms of narrowing the gap in per capita income between the people living in a depressed region and the average for the nation or some other region over some specified period of time. Small area development is a relatively new field of endeavour which has attracted the attention of the planners considerably. In an economy of regional imbalances and of exclusively separated topographical regions and also divided into small units of rural communities, like that of India, it becomes an increasingly important responsibility of the planners to plan from below. Nothing more than the rural communities, which form the bulk of India's population, need to be stimulated first and given proper attention with regard to planning and area development. A problem of this kind should not be set aside on the pretext of not having a proven methodology to allow planners to determine whether or not a small area economy is viable and whether the selected area has sufficient size and resource base to accomplish the needed development. It becomes naturally an excuse for the planners who hesitate in adopting schemes and taking the lead to plan from lowest level of an economic system.

2. *The Concept*

The planning of a small localised economy or community economic system is of great importance from the point of view of most of the under-developed or developing countries. The fruits of planning which are reaped at national scale are enjoyed mostly by the residents of economically strong areas and the weaker section of society gets very low share of the net proceed. Many legislative enactments of State and National level have aimed at helping such small communities in India that are in economic trouble and thousands of rupees have been

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spent each year to promote orderly community growth in the name of "Community Development" and to prevent local and regional imbalances in the name of "area development or town and county planning." But the more such steps are adopted the lesser they become fruitful. The reason being that most of the economists have in the past or even recent past concentrated more often either on national units (macro system) or on the most elemental units (micro system). Consequently, from a theoretical as well as from a practical standpoint, they could not arrive at the solution that was best suited to the homogeneous and organic growth of an economic system.

The Community Economic System and the Gramdan Model, as will be explained later, are the building blocks of medioeconomic system. They cannot specifically be called as "macro" or "micro" units. It may be said that the community economic system is a primary cell within a macro economic system. Also, a community economic system is a collection of micro units, it is certainly related to, but not exactly the same as, the usual connotation of a micro system. Because the community system has distinct characteristics when compared to either the micro or macro systems, it lies in between these two, might better be defined as a "Medioeconomic system". As this system has special geographical, social, cultural and political significance of its own, it is better if they are so organised, administered and economically planned as to generate better understanding, social climate and the economic atmosphere for growth and development. A unit of this kind has come into existence in India in the shape of village community which may well be called as Gramdan Unit and which may have economically viable identity either at village level or in its aggregate form of a "Block Dan" or at "District-Dan" level. The properties of a Community economy are the same as that of "Block economy" or the economy of a District-Dan level. The community economic system, therefore, is defined as "a collection of activity, people and producing units occupying a specific and recognizable geographic area, the members of which have common economic interest".² It may be called an area of some sort of homogeneity which lends itself for integration with wider interests within or even beyond that area. This homogeneity and common economic interest in the present context of the Indian economy have been generated by the Gramdan Movement.

3. *The Economic Base Analysis—An Input Output Approach*

The Economic basis of the community system which is assumed basically as rural, is to have production and consumption activities which are carried on at the level of most elemental unit within the area itself. These elemental units have got mobility of economic resources and upon introduction into heterogeneous geographical framework, they tend to cluster in places where the situation is such that it produces a comparatively favourable atmosphere of some sort. Each of these units

is assumed to acquire a certain degree of special efficiency in some productive activities and also regulate to a certain extent the social consumption habits, so that it may produce more of some goods or services than consume and consume more of other goods and services than it may produce. This special productive enterprise establishes the need for trading—both within the local cluster and with units in other clusters.³

There is a perfect interdependence as it is assumed, between input and output for each micro unit (elemental unit), since something cannot be produced from nothing. These inputs include locally produced raw material and other factors of production. The inputs also include the output of other micro units in the cluster and still other factors of production are included which are imported from other clusters. Apart from this interdependence, it is also assumed for economic base concept that input must equal output for each micro unit (inventories here are reduced to zero). In fact, since input is equal to output for each micro unit, then input would equal output for the whole community economic system. A theory here can easily be evolved that an increase in output will need a proportionate increase in input.

It is also assumed that input pattern and sources of supply for any micro unit are somewhat stable overtime and for varying levels of output. The assumption here is to have a fixed input coefficient for a particular scale of production in a localised economy. This leads us to draw an inference that the proportion of total input coming from inside the community economy system will remain constant over a specific time period, regardless of alterations in total input (or output), since the community economic system is nothing more than an aggregation of the individual micro units. The inputs of this system may be divided into two parts—one local and other imported. For economic base study, we consider the local inputs only because it is through the local inputs that the multiplier effect of an exogenous economic activity is obtained. Implied in this situation is a constant pattern of trade with the outside world. Here total input for the system equals total output and also individual input are given as equalling individual output. As an aggregate, micro units operating within this economic system are producing for two types of markets: one located outside the system (export) and other located inside (local). An independent increase or decrease in the local market is not possible since this market is determined by local input requirements that are hypothesized to be a constant proportion of total output. However, the export market (an exogenous factor) is not so restricted and can vary at will.⁴ One can here find an answer as to how does total economic activity or total output of the system vary with changes in export. It naturally leads us to find out the export multiplier. It was assumed that:

$$X_i = Y_i$$

Where

X_i = total input by i th micro unit.

Y_i = total output by i th micro unit.

Also, a constant input pattern was assumed, i.e., where a_{ix} represents input to the i th micro unit from the local system, a_i is constant for all values of X_i and, of course, of Y_i .

In aggregating these micro units into a community economic system we have:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n X_i = \sum_{i=1}^n Y_i$$

or

$$X = Y$$

Where

X = total community input.

Y = total community output.

Now let A represent the total local input coefficient for the local system, that is:

$$A = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n a_{ix}}{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i}$$

The coefficient A is constant here by reason of assumption of a constant output relationship.

Thus:

$$X - AX = \text{total non local input (import)}$$

Here

$$X = \text{total input}$$

$$AX = \text{total local input}$$

So

$$X - AX = \text{imports}$$

$$\text{And since } X = Y$$

$$Y - AY = \text{total export}$$

Here

$$Y = \text{total output}$$

$$AY = \text{locally consumed output}$$

So

$$Y - AY = \text{Export (It is the remainder which serves as total local export)}$$

In denoting total local exports by Z, we have

$$Y - AY = Z$$

and desired relation of export to total output:

$$Y = (I - A)^{-1} Z$$

The factor $(I - A)^{-1}$ is commonly called the community multiplier.

4. *Export Base Theory of Community Growth*

The community multiplier determines as to how large a domestic sector can be supported by export sector. Export, in fact, plays an important role as an exogenous stimulant of economic growth of the community. Internally in a community economy as everything being fixed, export remains the only basis that needs to be encouraged for the growth of that region. The study of area planning of this type places particular emphasis on export sector of the region because it is regarded to be a critical determinant of its growth rate and economic structure.

The first step towards this growth study has commonly been initiated by the export of primary commodities and it is known as "staple theory". A next step, however, is the "export base theory" that recognises a system where impetus to growth comes from other sources, for example, the export of manufactured and processed products.

In order to have the initiation of growth, the export sector requires external demands for its products. Again, for a sustained growth, the income thus generated by the export sector should serve local market so as to gear up the local trade, transport service, construction and other economic activities. It is to be noted here that if income distribution pattern within a community economy remains highly unequal, i.e., if a large proportion of a labour force is deprived of the benefits of an increase in export income, the community multiplier will be small and the development of a dependent domestic sector retarded. For a successful area development production possibilities must be broadened. Just to begin with, one or two export products may form the first phase of development but for a longer period, lack of a varied resource base may become a limiting factor for the economy. A region's resource base may of course be broadened over time by technological advancement. The ability of an area to industrialize depends upon its capacity to adopt the type of industry best suited to that area. The adopted industry may be market-oriented, material oriented and labour-oriented, depending upon the area and its characteristics. For a successful planning of a region, the choice of the right type of industry is essential. It is suggested that a sustained rise in per capita income is obviously an

indicator of the growth of an economy and for which expansion of the export base is pre-requisite. A narrow export base in the long run will fall short of in generating the expected per capita income. "An increase in export will cause a multiple increase in income but a decrease in export will cause income to decrease by the same multiple."⁷

The export base economy has a special message for areas which fall under the category of under-developed economies. The model of a Gramdan system under study, realistically belongs to such an economy. The export production system here should be cautiously handled lest it might fail to produce sustained growth. Generally, it is seen that the individual effects of export expansion have accrued to a relatively small group of people having larger incomes and who have the capacity to transfer the proceeds abroad (to other higher regions) and import luxury goods. Even if the proceeds remain within the regional limits, it has a strong tendency to be spent on bureaucratic establishments rather than on social overhead investments. The area planning, therefore, be so handled as to avoid the dead end type of economy of the past and explore the possibilities of new and most efficient system of external and internal economies and their inter relationship through a dynamic process of input output analysis.

5. *Input Output Framework for Rural Planning*

So far we have discussed the theoretical structure of the community economic system and evidence to the effect that the activity of such a system can be measured and analysed through input output method. "The approach of input output is one means of organising a vast amount of data to achieve consistency among a larger number of estimates and projections. Besides yielding a set of area output multipliers, the input output approach can be used to construct a system of area social accounts. These accounts can provide a conceptual framework for area information system."⁸ But it will be noted that the input output application to rural economic system is somewhat different than the national analysis for which Leontief originally developed it⁹ The difference lies only in the analysis of the problem, although the model outline itself is identical. The difference between the community input output table and that of national input output table may be summarised as follows:

(1) That in community input output table we consider for our specific study those inputs which are locally produced. These inputs only determine the community multiplier for a given export base.

(2) That the classification of sectors for the study of community economy is so devised and geared up as to suit the conditions of local economy. In the national table of input output the sectors are so aggregated that sectors of local or regional importance lose their significance.

(3) A community economy essentially is rural in character and as such it differs from other regional systems which may have rural as

well as urban characteristics. The composition of sectors within the community economy naturally differs from that of national or other regional economies.

6. The Format of the Model

Once the region has been defined, whether a community economy or a Gramdan area, one can construct a transactional table and study the intra-community activities or inter-sectoral flows of commodities within that area. An input output matrix is a useful framework for describing these inter-relationships. The table No. 1 shows the sample transactions within the economy having only three industries. The section of the table containing the X_{ij} 's denotes endogenous transactions. Each X_{ij} denotes sales (output) by i th industry which goes as input to j th industry. Rows represent the sales while columns show the purchases. Export in the table has been shown by Z_i 's section and is represented as exogenous sector. In order to show a complete picture of all transactions an import row has been added to the table. However, it should be noted that the import row is not a functional part of model under study. Here total input is equal to total output in all industries' transactions. The table No. 2 shows input coefficients. As it was earlier assumed that all input coefficients were constant, a change in export sector would naturally result in the change of inputs and this effect can easily be studied. Here a_{ij} 's are said to be equal to X_{ij}/X_j . The function part of the table is only that section which is covered by a_{ij} 's. This a_{ij} 's segment in the table is then used in finding out the inverse matrix $(1-A)^{-1}$ which is the community multiplier. Each element in an inverse matrix indicates miniature multiplier denoting both direct and indirect effect upon the producing and purchasing sectors.

TABLE 1
A Sample Transaction Table

	(Purchases)			Export	Total output
	Industry 1	Industry 2	Industry 3		
(Sales) Industry 1	X_{11}	X_{12}	X_{13}	Z_1	Y_1
Industry 2	X_{21}	X_{22}	X_{23}	Z_2	Y_2
Industry 3	X_{31}	X_{32}	X_{33}	Z_3	Y_3
Imports	W_1	W_2	W_3		ΣW
* Total Input or (output)	X_1	X_2	X_3	ΣZ	$\Sigma Y + \Sigma W$ or $(\Sigma X + \Sigma Z)$

TABLE 2
A Sample Input Coefficient Table

	<i>Industry 1</i>	<i>Industry 2</i>	<i>Industry 3</i>	<i>Export</i>	<i>Total output</i>
Industry 1	a_{11}	a_{12}	a_{13}	$Z_1/\Sigma Z$	$Y_1/(\Sigma Y + \Sigma W)$
Industry 2	a_{21}	a_{22}	a_{23}	$Z_2/\Sigma Z$	$Y_2/(\Sigma Y + \Sigma W)$
Industry 3	a_{31}	a_{32}	a_{33}	$Z_3/\Sigma Z$	$Y_3/(\Sigma Y + \Sigma W)$
Imports	W_1/X_1	W_2/X_2	W_3/X_3		$\Sigma W/(\Sigma Y + \Sigma W)$
Total	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

7. *Inter-Community Economic Analysis*

Apart from the economic activities within the community framework, the most important and useful study is also to be made regarding one community economy as linked to other community systems. We have already noted that part of the production of the region is purchased by other region. The value of these exports was part of the value of production of the region under study. We also noted that production in each industry required inputs that were purchased from other regions. The value of these imports was not a part of the value of region's production and had to be deducted from the value of total sales in the region of study. In order to concentrate on the inter-community links in the accounting system of the following model summarises all final demand sectors into domestic final demand and export.

The table No. 3 provides a simple input output matrix showing the inter-regional links in the accounting framework for three regions.¹⁰ The columns show the purchases made by a region or the uses of income earned from production in the region. The rows show the distribution of a region's production. In the more detailed accounting system net regional product was equal to the sum of consumption, net investment, government expenditure and export less imports. In the abbreviated framework of the table, net regional product is equal to the sum of net domestic final demand and export less imports. For example, the sum of the first three items in the first row in the table is net regional product for region 1. This is the sum of net domestic final demand less import plus export to region 2 and region 3. The first column shows the regions from which goods and services were purchased by the people in region 1. The purchases include those goods and services produced

locally, which is net domestic final demand less imports, and imports from region 2 and 3.

TABLE 3
(Simplified Inter-Regional Input Output Matrix)

	<i>Purchases by Region 1</i>	<i>Purchases by Region 2</i>	<i>Purchases by Region 3</i>	<i>Net Regional Product</i>
Production in Region 1	$C_1 - M_1$	M_{12}	M_{13}	Y_1
Production in Region 2	M_{21}	$C_2 - M_2$	M_{23}	Y_2
Production in Region 3	M_{31}	M_{32}	$C_3 - M_3$	Y_3
Total Purchases by each Region	C_1	C_2	C_3	

M_1, M_2, M_3 , are imports and so to be deducted from C_1, C_2, C_3 respectively.
 $M_{21}, M_{31}, M_{12}, M_{32}, M_{13}, M_{23}$ are exports of separate regions.
 C_1, C_2, C_3 , are total purchases made by their respective regions.

8. An Approach to Gramdan Development

So far the input output analysis has been sparingly utilised for the purposes of regional or area planning. The recent writings of Karl Fox,¹¹ Barbara Berman and Associates¹² and Lief Johansen¹³, have offered suggestions for an approach that involves the sequential nature of rural economic growth processes. The best approach to a community economic development within the framework of input output analysis from Indian point of view, can be of Gramdan Model, which promises, besides other measures of regional planning, a strong community of common interest, understanding and economic base.

In a country like India where regional imbalances predominate the economic scene, a careful, effective and analytical approach is needed to minimise the regional disparities and check the growing menace like that of Telengana, Naxalite and the Land Grab Movements. The Gramdan or Block-Dan areas are best suited to regional planning and input output analysis is a powerful tool for explaining the economic activities and inter-relationships within or outside the community economy. The policy makers should realistically aim at the regionalization of Indian planning. The regional planning should be reflected explicitly as a strategy in the objective function of the national planning instead of being a by-product. Since Gramdan areas are best suited for such regional plan-

ning, a Gramdan Development cell should be organised under Planning Commission and the area development plan should be formulated under some expert guidance in consultation with the local people and their leaders.

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APPENDIX B

VILLAGE SCHEDULE

(used for the Survey of Māngroth)

I. Name of the Village Block Tehsil
 Distt.

II. General Situation:

(1) Physical Setting:—

Climate	Temperature
Rainfall	Soil
Forest	Relief

(2) General Land Use:—

Area Under Cultivation . . .	Pastures
Fallows	Forest
Settlement	Gardens
Tanks	Others

III. History of Gramdan—Towards Gramdan—attitude or opinion
 formation

IV. Changing Pattern:

- (A) Number of the Landless
 Their Caste & Profession
- (B) Number of the Landholders
 Sizes of Holdings before and after Gramdan
- (C) Total Agricultural Production
 Kharif Crop
 Rabi Crop
- (D) Methods of Cultivation Employed
- (E) Facilities of Manures Green, Cowdung
 or Chemical
 Ploughing

- Irrigation.....?
- Type of Labour.....
- (F) Change in Crop Pattern:
 - Land or Plot used at present in various crops which was used for some other purpose previously.....
 - What type of change?.....
- (G) Distribution of Land—New Policy.
 - (i) Name of New Recipients.....
 - (ii) Coop. or Collective Approach.....
- (2) Economic Life:
 - (A) Income of the Village.....
 - (B) Income of the Families in Different Classes.....
 - (C) How far Gramdan is responsible for increase in income?.....
- (3) Human Labour & Efficiency.....
- (4) Cattle Rearing.....Types and Number of Animals.....
- (5) Village Industries:
 - (a) Types of Industries.....
 - (b) Their Growth and Output.....
 - (c) Efficiency in Industrial Activities.....
- (6) Village Overhead Facilities:
 - (A) Roads.....
 - (B) Sanitation.....
 - (C) Lighting.....
 - (D) Health.....
 - (E) Housing.....
- (7) Family Life:
 - (A) Changing Intra-Family Relations.....
 - (B) Changing Inter-Family Relations.....
 - (C) Inter-Village Relations.....
- (8) Marketing—Changes in:
 - (A) Place.....
 - (B) Material
- (9) Social Change:
 - (A) Wholistic Approach:
 - (i) Social institutions
 - Marriage.....

- Festivals.....
- Music & Recreation.....
- (ii) Individual Approach
 - Taste and Temperament.....
- (10) Education:
 - (A) Adult
 - (i) Men.....
 - (ii) Women.....
 - (B) Children.....
 - (C) Change and Interest in Masses
- (11) Village Self-Government
 - (A) Ways & Methods
 - (B) Establishment of Sarvodaya Mandal
 - Composition, Membership, Function, etc.
- (12) The Future Plan:
 -
 -

APPENDIX C

भूदान यज्ञ के दान पत्र का नमूना

आचार्य विनोबा जी द्वारा भूदान यज्ञ के आह्वान पर

मैं/हम ग्राम
 तहसील ज़िला प्रांत
 का/के निवासी मेरी/हमारी माल की कुल एकड़ ज़मीन में
 से जिन पर पूरा कानूनी हक मेरा/हमारा है, खुशक ज़मीन एकड़
 डेसिमल सर्वे नम्बर तरी ज़मीन
 एकड़ डेसिमल सर्वे नम्बर ग्राम
 नम्बर तहसील ज़िला प्रांत
 बाकी ज़मीन पूज्य विनोबा जी द्वारा शुरू किए गए भूदान यज्ञ
 में विचारपूर्वक अपनी खुशी से दान दे रहा हूँ/रहे हैं। इस दान में दी हुई
 ज़मीन पर आयन्दा मे हमारा या मेरे/हमारे खानदान या वारिसान का कोई
 हक या दावा नहीं रहेगा। यह ज़मीन गरीबों की भलाई के लिए पूज्य विनोबा
 जी जिस तरह चाहें उपयोग में ला सकते हैं।

मुकाम तारीख

गवाह :

दाता का पूरा नाम व पता

1—

.....

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2—

डाकखाना

ज़िला

APPENDIX D

ग्रामदान का सामूहिक घोषणा-पत्र

हम ज़िला.....अचल/या विकास खण्ड/.....
थाना/तहसील/.....पंचायत..... ग्राम.....
के निवासी संत विनोबा जी द्वारा प्रवर्तित ग्राम-स्वराज्य के विचार को अच्छी
तरह से समझ-बूझकर अपने गांव के लिए ग्रामदान करते हैं और इस उद्देश्य
के निमित्त :—

1. हम अपनी कृषि-योग्य भूमि की कम-से-कम पांच फीसदी अर्थात् बीसवाँ हिस्सा भूमि अपने गांव के भूमिहीन भाइयों के लिए देते हैं। भूमिहीनों को भूदान द्वारा इसके पूर्व बांटी हुई जमीन इसमें शामिल कर ली जायगी।

2. हम इस गांव में अपनी कुल भूमि की मालकियत का अधिकार ग्राम-सभा को समर्पित करते हैं। लेकिन भूमिहीनों के लिए कम-से-कम पांच फीसदी जमीन निकाल देने के बाद जो जमीन हमारे पास बचेगी उसमें काश्त करने का हमारा अधिकार रहेगा, तथा हमारे उत्तराधिकारियों का। ग्रामसभा की अनुमति से हम उसे सरकार को और सहकारी समिति को कर्ज के लिए रेहन रख सकेंगे, अथवा ग्रामसभा को या ग्रामदान में शामिल किसी सदस्य परिवार को बेच सकेंगे।

3. हम अपने दखल की भूमि की उपज का चालीसवाँ हिस्सा/भूमि का राजस्व चुकाने तथा बटाई का हिस्सा बांटने के बाद, अथवा आगे जो ग्राम-सभा तय करे, ग्रामकोष या ग्राम-निधि के लिए ग्रामसभा को देगे। जिन्हें नकद आय होती है वे अपनी मासिक आय का तीसवाँ हिस्सा/निश्चित आय का तीसवाँ हिस्सा जहां स्पष्ट न हो वहां ग्रामसभा वह हिस्सा तय करेगी, जैसे—व्यापार की आय, व्यापार की कुल आमदनी नहीं बल्कि आमदनी का वह भाग माना जायगा जो मालिक के हिस्से में रहता हो, अथवा आगे जो भी ग्राम-सभा तय करे, नकद या श्रम के रूप में ग्रामसभा को देगे।

इस प्रकार जो पूँजी बनेगी उससे गांव की भलाई और विकास का कोई भी कार्य जो ग्रामसभा समय-समय पर तय करे, किया जा सकेगा। इस प्रकार

के सारे कामों में सदैव उन लोगों की मलाई को पहले ध्यान में रखा जायगा जो ज्यादा जरूरतमन्द या असहाय हों।

4. गांव के प्रत्येक वयस्क को सम्मिलित कर हम ग्रामसभा का गठन करेंगे। वह ग्रामसभा ग्राम-माता की तरह गांव में सब लोगों की देखभाल करेगी। ग्रामसभा का संचालन सर्वसम्मति अथवा सर्वानुमति से होगा।

विशेष सूचना : ग्रामदान की घोषणा निम्न शर्तें पूरी होने पर ही की जा सकती है :

1. गांव में रहने वाले भूमिवानों में 75 प्रतिशत भूमिवानों के हस्ताक्षर प्राप्त हुए हों।
2. गांव में रहने वाले भूमिवानों की गांवों में जो जमीन हो उसमें से कम से कम 51 प्रतिशत भूमि ग्रामदान में शामिल हुई हो।
3. गांव में रहने वाले कुल बालिगों में से 75 प्रतिशत ग्रामदान में शामिल हुए हों।

फार्म

क्रम संख्या	पूरा नाम	जमीन का रकबा अन्दाज से	थाना	हस्ताक्षर
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APPENDIX E

ग्रामदान का व्यक्तिगत समर्पण-पत्र

मैं जिला.....अंचल/विकास खंड/.....
थाना/तहसील/..... पंचायत.....
ग्राम.....का निवासी संत विनोबा जी द्वारा प्रवर्तित ग्राम-स्वराज्य
का विचार अच्छी तरह समझ-बूझकर.....ग्राम की
मेरे खाते की कुल जमीन की मालकियत ग्राम-सभा को समर्पित करता हूँ।

1. मैं अपनी कृषि-योग्य भूमि का कम-से-कम पांच फीसदी अर्थात् बीसवां हिस्सा भूमि अपने भूमिहीन भाइयों के लिए देता हूँ।
2. भूमिहीनों के लिए, कम से कम पांच फीसदी, भूमि निकाल देने के बाद जो जमीन हमारे पास रहेगी उसे काश्त करने का हक हमें रहेगा, तथा हमारे उत्तराधिकारियों को रहेगा। ग्रामसभा की अनुमति से हम इस जमीन को सरकार तथा सहकारी समिति को वर्ज के लिए रेहन रख सकेंगे, अथवा ग्रामसभा को या ग्रामदान में शामिल किसी सदस्य परिवार को बेच सकेंगे।
3. इस जमीन का व्योरा नीचे दिया है :
गांव का नाम.....जमीन का नंबर.....
रकबा.....।
4. यह जमीन रेहन नहीं है/यह जमीन रेहन है। रेहन का व्योरा नीचे दिया गया है :
किसके पास रेहन है.....कितने रुपये के लिए रेहन है
.....सूद की दर.....कितना रुपया चुकाना
शेष है.....।
5. मेरे ऊपर रेहन के सिवाय सरकार का और अन्य व्यक्तियों का कर्जा नहीं है/है।

इसका व्योरा नीचे दिया है :

कर्ज देनेवाले का नाम.....कर्ज की रकम.....
 मूद की दर..... कितना रुपया चुकाना शेष
 है.....।

दस्तखत.....

गवाह का नाम :

हस्ताक्षर

1.

2.

नोट यदि जमीन की मालकियन का खाता सम्मिलित हौ तो सभी खातेदारों
 के हस्ताक्षर होने चाहिए ।

APPENDIX F

GLOSSARY OF NON-ENGLISH WORDS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Ahimsa	: Non-violence; Love.
Anand Yatra	: Pilgrimage of Joy.
Bhoo-dan Yajna	: Land-gift-mission.
Buddhi-dan	: Gift of wisdom or intellectual attainments.
Dan-patra	: Gift-deed.
Dand-Shakti	: Legal and military power of the State.
Daridra Narayan	: God as embodied in the lowliest and lost.
Jan-Shakti	: Self-reliant power of the people.
Jeevan-Dan	: Dedication of life.
Kanchan-Mukti	: Freedom from gold.
Lok-niti	: New polity or politics of the people.
Loka-shakti	: Self-reliant power of the people.
Pada-yatra	: Pilgrimage on foot.
Sampatti-dan	: Gift of wealth or sharing in one's income.
Samya-Yoga	: The ideal of equality based on compassion and bodily labour.
Sarvodaya	: The welfare or uplift of one and all.
Satyagraha	: Insistence on truth; civil non violent resistance.
Shanti-sena	: Peace-Army.
Sootanjali	: Gift of one hank of self-spun yarn.
Sarvabhoota hite	
Ratah	: Good and welfare of all.
Yajna	: A mission or offering or sacrifice.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.I.C.C.	: All India Congress Committee.
A.I.R.C.S.	: All India Rural Credit Survey.
G.O.I.	: Government of India.
J.P.	: Jayaprakash Narayan.
N.S.S.	: National Sample Survey.
R.B.I.	: Reserve Bank of India.
S.S.S.	: Sarva Seva Sangh. (Rajghat, Kashi).